UNVEILING PASTORAL WELLNESS: A DEEP DIVE IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST ITINERANT MODEL

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ABSTRACT

UNVEILING PASTORL WELLNESS: A DEEP DIVE IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST ITINERANT MODEL

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The context is the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Inc. The research problem is that the itineracy model has negatively affected the context, families, and the well-being of the pastors. The hypothesis statement indicated that if pastors and church leaders attend a symposium about the effects of itineracy on families, then pastors will be equipped with tools to change how itineracy affects their families. Data methods will include pre- and post-project questionnaires, group discussions, and focused individual interviews. Also, the PERMAH Workplace survey was utilized. The project lasted six weeks. The research outcomes supported the hypothesis statement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I begin by giving honor and thanks to God for instilling the zeal, commitment, wisdom, and understanding needed to bring this project to completion. Without God's sustaining grace, none of this would have been possible.

To my family, the Fleurimond and Pierre extended family, thank you for being my biggest cheerleaders. Your words of encouragement, financial support, and tough love kept me going when the weight of this academic journey felt overwhelming. A special shoutout to all my cousins. This accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine. We did this together.

To my brothers and lifelong friends for over thirty-five years: you know who you are (THE U+1). Your greatness has always inspired me, and your companionship has made this journey worthwhile. I worked harder because of my fear of being the "weakest link," and I thank you for that unspoken motivation.

To my Southeastern Conference family, I am deeply grateful for your support in allowing me to pursue my dream of becoming a doctor of the Church. A special thanks to my pastoral colleagues who contributed as participants in this project. Your insights were invaluable. To my professional associates, Dr. Carldin N. Arthur, Dr. Donald Burden, Dr. Herman Davis, Dr. Dion Henry, and Dr. Bryant Loyd Smith, I am honored to have benefited from your wisdom, encouragement, and example.

To the churches I have had the privilege of pastoring in my short sixteen years of ministry: Mt Sinai Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ewing Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church, Emmanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church, Palm Bay Seventh-day Adventist Church, Coconut Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church, Unity Seventh-day Adventist Church, West Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, and First University Seventh-day Adventist Church; you have all shaped my philosophy of pastoral ministry and itineracy. Through the highs and lows, your prayers, collaboration, and love have strengthened my resolve. I am humbled and eternally grateful for all you have given me.

To my Watson-Curtis Fellows, my doctoral cohort, thank you for accepting me as part of your family. A. D., Justin (the unofficial leader), BOONE, and my roommate Stephen (unofficial personal musical director for the Academic Dean): the late nights, Zoom meetings, and moments of shared laughter kept me going. Our bond is forever.

To my academic mentors, Dr. William Curtis and Dr. Lance Watson, Sr., your guidance has been transformative. Sitting at your feet has been an honor, and your mentorship has made me believe in the possibility of greatness. I pray for a double portion of the wisdom and grace God has blessed you with. I can now identify with Paul having sat at the feet of Gamaliel.

To Dr. Herman Davis and Dr. Wintley Phipps, my spiritual fathers: Dr. Davis, your mentorship has been a cornerstone of my growth as a pastor. You modeled excellence in ministry, teaching me the importance of administrative competence and visionary leadership. Dr. Phipps, your music, counsel, and friendship have carried me through my darkest seasons. You taught me to dream big and reach for God's highest ideal. I am now more confident than ever that "It is in the quiet crucible of your personal

private sufferings that your noblest dreams are born God's greatest gifts are given in compensation for what you have been through." Thank you for your mentorship, I am forever grateful.

To my father, Pastor Job Fleurimond, thank you for modeling the heart of a true shepherd. Your sacrifices and prayers have paved the way for me. I stand on your shoulders and dedicate this degree to you as much as to myself. I carry your identity in my name. I carry your passion in my ministry, and I will forever carry your legacy in my heart.

To my siblings, Jerry, Daniel, Sophia, and Mary Lyn: each of you played a unique role in my life and this journey. Jerry has always been my protector and role model. Daniel was my first teacher, pushing me to rise above mediocrity. Sophia nurtured me with wisdom and kindness. Mary Lyn, my baby sister, thank you for being my friend and for keeping me grounded. I love you all so much. We can succeed, even against all odds!

To my nephews and nieces, Big A, Jazzy, Princess Kellie, and Zay, you inspire me to be the best version of myself. This accomplishment is for you, too. You are Fleurimonds, and there is nothing you cannot do! Thank you.

To my wife, thank you for your selflessness, sacrifice, and unwavering support. You put your dreams on hold so I could chase mine, and for that, I owe you the world. I vow to be for you what you have been for me. You have held me down long before I started this program, and I thank you for your commitment. "Give me time, and I will give you the world!" We are getting closer… I love you more than words can express, thank you, my love.

To my boys, Louis and Lucas, you are my reason for everything. I hope this accomplishment shows you that hard work and faith yield great rewards. You are my legacy and my greatest joy. Louis Georges Fleurimond, you carry my name, and daily, you continue to inspire and amaze me. Thank you for your hard dedication! Lucas Grey Fleurimond, you are my little brawler. You are thoughtful and protective of your loved ones. Continue to reach for the sky, Daddy sees you, and Daddy loves you. Both of you are my best friends!

To my mothers, Sudie Grey Artis and Maryse Adeline Pierre Fleurimond, though you are not here to witness this moment, I carry your lessons, prayers, and love with me. Sudie Grey Artis, thank you for everything. Your legacy drives me. I am grateful for the time we shared together. “Momma We did it”! This degree is for you, Dr. Maryse Adeline Pierre Fleurimond, a reflection of your legacy and an acknowledgment of your dreams fulfilled through me. Your unwavering faith has inspired me to pursue excellence, not for my glory but to reflect on the God who sustains us through all seasons. You may be absent physically, but your spirit continues to guide me. Thank you, Mom. I love you, and I pray this achievement honors your memory. Your life was a testament to resilience, determination, and unwavering faith. You were a force of nature, balancing the demands of family, education, and professional aspirations with a grace that left an indelible mark on all who knew you. I thank you and honor you.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation, "Survey on Pastoral and Congregational Well-Being Amidst Shifting Views on Itineracy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," to all the pastoral families whose well-being is constantly threatened, and to the congregations who long for continual growth. I hope that this resource brings mutual understanding and compassion. May this research stir a realignment that will foster a greater emphasis on mission.

I dedicate this dissertation to my first pastoral family, my own family. Our countless moves, disruptions, and sacrifices have been the inspiration for this work. May it be a resource and lifeline for families navigating similar challenges.

To Pastor Job Fleurimond and Lady Maryse Adeline Pierre Fleurimond (posthumously), I dedicate this work to honor your sacrifices, resilience, and unwavering faith. To my siblings, cousins, and all pastor's kids who have endured the challenges of itinerant ministry, this is for you. May you find hope and healing in these pages.

To Southeastern Conference, the community that believed in me and gave me my start in ministry: this is my gift to you, with the hope that it will inspire systems of care and support for pastors and their families. We have such an exceptional history deeply rooted in Christ Jesus, a legacy that has shaped countless lives and ministries. I pray that my conference, which has invested so much in my journey from my elementary school education to the completion of this doctoral degree, will find value in this work. It is my

hope that this document will be thoughtfully reviewed, and its insights implemented to foster a culture where pastors and their families can truly thrive.

When families flourish, pastors flourish. When pastors flourish, churches flourish. And when churches flourish, God gives the increase… not only in numbers but, more importantly, in the fulfillment of our shared mission. May this work serve as a tool to strengthen our pastoral leadership and empower congregations to support and uplift the men and women who dedicate their lives to ministry.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my aunts and uncles and the memory of those I lost along this journey Dr. Mathieu Fleurimond, Ruth Davilmar, and those who we continue to mourn Caleb Mondestin Fleurimond, Christianne Dudu, Edline Limage, Joel Pierre and to all those who dream of a better, more compassionate ministry for God's people.

INTRODUCTION

God's call to pastoral ministry predated my arrival on this earth. The prophet Jeremiah's sentiment of a God who "yada" resonates deeply with me, reminding me of God's gracious and sanctifying call to ministry. Divine knowledge, as demonstrated in Jeremiah's narrative, is both prenatal and providential. In Jeremiah's case, this knowledge manifests in God's reassurance that Jeremiah had been set apart for prophetic ministry before his birth. Despite his doubts, God provided Jeremiah with the tools necessary to fulfill his calling, symbolized by the divine act of touching his mouth and putting His words there. Similar to Jeremiah, the doubting of the call is reassured with God's providential gifting of requisite tools to accomplish the mission and the calling by touching my mouth, and "the motif of God's words in Jeremiah's mouth" is seen as a constant reminder of God's approval and election for the prophet.[1]

Although I experienced God's confirmation, my journey into ministry was accompanied by caution and skepticism, similar to Gideon's response to his divine calling. As a "P.K." (pastor's kid), I had a unique vantage point, observing public and private dimensions of ministry. From an early age, I witnessed the joys, burdens, and complexities of pastoral service. While many see the visible aspects of ministry, the preaching, teaching, and leading worship, I was privy to the less-visible, behind-the-

[1] Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, *Andrews Bible Commentary* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2020), 909.

scenes realities. I observed the weight my father carried as he navigated the demands of shepherding a congregation while also striving to care for his family.

These early observations gave me a nuanced understanding of the toll that ministry can exact on pastors. Kirk Byron Jones captures this reality in his book *Rest in the Storm: Self-Care Strategies for Clergy and Other Caregivers*:

> This pain is induced by trying to do too much trying to be all things to all people. By the thousands, persons are overdosing on over-commitment. More than a few of these persons are clergy and teachers serving in churches and other religious institutions. across the country, indeed throughout the world. Day in and day out, they. minister with apparent vigor and compassion, but just inches beneath the surface of such a ministry lies a churning undercurrent of discontent.[2]

This observation of the silent struggles of clergy has been a consistent thread in my pastoral journey. In my context, I have found that many pastors are merely surviving rather than thriving. This lack of flourishing is particularly evident within the Seventh-day Adventist Church's system of pastoral itinerancy, which requires pastors to accept transfers to new districts and churches based on the decisions of denominational leadership.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates within an "episcopal" structure, where conference presidents, in accordance with conference by-laws and denominational policies, assign pastors to specific churches. Pastoral itinerancy is characterized by a series of appointments and transfers within a defined geographical territory. These territories, or conferences, vary in size, ranging from single-state regions to multi-state territories. While the conference covers the financial costs associated with relocation,

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[2] Kirk B. Jones, *Rest In The Storm* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press Publishing, 2021), 1-2.

pastors and their families are often left in isolation to manage the practical, emotional, and social disruptions caused by these moves.

The realities of pastoral itinerancy extend far beyond the logistical challenges of moving. Families must navigate spousal employment transitions, disruptions to children's education, and the financial strain of maintaining duplicate housing during relocation. These challenges are compounded by the need to adapt to new communities and congregations, often with limited support from the conference. My own experiences as both a pastor's child and a denominational pastor have revealed a troubling pattern: while conferences adhere to policy regarding relocations, they frequently fail to provide holistic support for pastors and their families as they acclimate to new contexts.

This lack of support often results in significant stress for pastoral families, leading to long-term consequences for their well-being. However, the level of disruption a family experiences can vary based on their preparedness and stability. Families equipped with strategies to navigate the realities of itinerancy are better positioned to mitigate its negative effects.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the impact of pastoral itinerancy on pastors, their families, and congregations. By gathering and analyzing qualitative data, this project aims to provide tools and strategies to address the challenges associated with itinerancy. This study also introduces an interdisciplinary approach to pastoral well-being, drawing on Positive Psychology's PERMAH theory. By periodically assessing Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishments, and Physical Health, pastors and their families can build resilience and foster holistic well-being.

Each chapter of this dissertation builds upon the previous one, beginning with a biblical and theological foundation and progressing to historical, interdisciplinary, and data-driven perspectives. The insights and findings presented are not merely theoretical; they are informed by lived experiences and grounded in practical application.

Chapter two is the biblical foundation and is rooted in the Pauline corpus, specifically in Paul's correspondence with the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 3:5–8). This theological framework underscores the insignificance of individual laborers in God's mission, emphasizing instead the supreme significance of God, who provides the increase. Paul's concept of co-laboring in God's vineyard is the cornerstone for understanding ministry collaboration and divine empowerment in pastoral work.

Chapter three covers the historical foundation for this project. Pastoral Itinerancy is the practice of denominational leadership appointing pastors to local church congregations.[3] This chapter explores the historical background of pastoral itinerancy and examines the ecclesiastical commitment pastors make to serve at the discretion of the denomination, often without personal input into the placement. The chapter also delves into the historical adoption and evolution of this practice within church history and its implications for pastoral ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, more precisely, the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Inc.

Chapter four is the theological foundation that addresses the challenges within current pastoral itinerancy practices, focusing on clergy well-being. The chapter posits that well-being is central to the Christian experience and highlights the theological significance of flourishing, rooted in the Creator's declaration of creation as "very good."

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[3] Alan K. Waltz, *A Dictionary for United Methodist* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 73.

This framework reflects a divine intention for human flourishing and argues for a symbiotic relationship in diverse pastoral leadership that promotes holistic health and effectiveness in ministry.

Chapter five is the interdisciplinary foundation. The emphasis is on Dr. Martin Seligman's work in Positive Psychology. Dr. Seligman expands theory to create a construct for well-being through the PERMAH Theory of Positive Psychology. Positive Psychology is defined as "the scientific study of the factors that enable individuals and communities to flourish."[4] It is important to note that Positive Psychology "is descriptive" rather than "prescriptive." Meaning, that this science is not instructing a certain way of life to ascend into a flourishing utopian life, but rather, Positive Psychology merely exposes the "factors that enable flourishing" beings, thus creating opportunities for possible abundant and flourishing life.[5]

Chapter six represents the heart of the project, detailing the eight-week period of interaction with Seventh-day Adventist pastors in the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Inc. Their transparency, shared experiences, and insights formed the foundation for data analysis. The chapter evaluates the hypothesis: "If Seventh-day Adventist denominational pastors within the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Inc., past and present, attend an eight-week symposium about the effects of itinerancy on the pastor's family, then pastors will be equipped with ministry tools to mitigate the negative impact of itinerancy on family and church well-being, while

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[4] Martin Seligman, "PERMA Theory of Well-Being and PERMA Workshops," University of Pennsylvania, https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/learn-more/perma-theory-well-being-and-perma-workshops.

[5] Martin E. P. Seligman, "PERMA Theory of Well-Being and PERMA Workshops," University of Pennsylvania, https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/learn-more/perma-theory-well-being-and-perma-workshops.

enhancing church mission execution." The chapter highlights the outcomes of the symposium and its implications for addressing the challenges of pastoral itinerancy, particularly through the lens of family and church health.

Central to this project is a desire to advocate for the well-being of all stakeholders in the pastoral ecosystem, including pastors, their families, congregations, and conference leaders. As someone who has lived the realities of pastoral life both as a pastor's child and as a pastor, I am uniquely positioned to address these challenges. My hope is to refine the system of pastoral itinerancy so that it balances the needs of the denomination with the well-being of pastors and their families.

This dissertation is a call to action. It is an invitation for denominational leaders, pastors, and congregations to acknowledge pastoral itinerancy's struggles and work collaboratively toward solutions. To the pastors, spouses, and children who bear the burdens of this system: you are seen, your struggles are valid, and your well-being matters. May the findings and insights in this study provide validation, encouragement, and practical tools to navigate the challenges of pastoral ministry. May this work inspire a renewed commitment to fostering holistic well-being within the pastoral community.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Introduction

God's call to pastoral ministry predated my arrival on this earth. The prophet Jeremiah's sentiment of a God that "yada," intimately reminds me of God's gracious and sanctifying calling to ministry. Furthermore, divine knowledge is always prenatal and providential. Similar to Jeremiah, the doubting of the call is reassured with God's providential gifting of requisite tools to accomplish the mission and the calling by touching my mouth, and "the motif of God's words in Jeremiah's mouth" is seen as a constant reminder of God's approval and election for the prophet.[1]

This knowledge of the prenatal call comes with a download of heavenly gifts and God's unmerited favor. I did not become generally aware of the call to pastoral ministry until my senior year of high school. I thought of myself as too young and not yet seasoned enough to walk in this calling. I did not wish to be a hypocrite, and I wanted to preach not only in words but also in deeds and deeds.

The call to ministry culminated my life journey up until that point. The highs and lows, successes and failures, stagnant seasons, and breakthrough seasons all played a pivotal role in my conviction of the calling on my life. I knew that God had ordained me

[1] Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, *Andrews Bible Commentary* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2020), 909.

to be different, and for many years, it seemed as though I was a square peg attempting to fit into a circular hole. My place within my family structure, my place within my circle of friends, or even my place in academia as I matriculated through a psychology degree. My place among these spaces never felt secure in these areas of life. It took a "Rock Bottom" experience to finally move from a general awareness to a personal conviction that God had called me to become a tool in his toolbox to be used by God in the mission of saving men.

My life experiences have brought me to this point where I generally believe that it is better to serve God than to seek the approval of men. This belief has helped to navigate the ecclesiastical political tsunamis of denominational ministry within my local context. It has been my practice to allow God to make room for me. I am not seeking men's approval or hoping to please my way to a better or "bigger" ministry context. God purged that mindset post my call. My bargain with God was simple: should I be allowed to continue in my college academic pursuit, that my goal in life would be to only please God and cease seeking the affirmation of men?

Although I experienced God's confirmation to ministry, like Gideon, I proceeded with caution and skepticism. As a "P.K." (pastor's kid), I have a front-row, panoramic view of ministry. I witnessed not only what is called the "public ministry," but I saw ministry in all of it facets, including behind the curtains. Objectively, I have noticed concerning pastors who are in ministry, what Kirk Byron Jones says in "Rest in the Storm: Self-Care Strategies for Clergy and Other Caregivers" in relation to the heavy load taken on by that pastor:

> This pain is induced by trying to do too much trying to be all things to all people. By the thousands, persons are overdosing on over-commitment. More than a few

> of these persons are clergy and teachers serving in churches and other religious institutions. across the country, indeed throughout the world. Day in and day out, they. minister with apparent vigor and compassion, but just inches beneath the surface of such a ministry lies a churning undercurrent of discontent.[2]

This reality of experiencing hardship while executing the ecclesiastical mission given by God seemed like a difficult proposition for a young man still in the valley of decision for life's future. Nevertheless, I relented into God's ark of safety and began this journey of ministry, electing to go to Oakwood University and, subsequently, the Seventh-Day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Thus beginning my journey to the denominational call to pastoral ministry.

As an ordained minister, I have no doubt learned the pastoral life lessons passed down to me from my father and now am experiencing them firsthand. There is a reality of submission to God and to self in ministering with the people God has given me to lead. Bruce Epperly speaks of certain challenges germane to ministers who are shepherds over sheep, contending that we are stuck in a never-ending cycle,

> Many pastors are well aware that they are running on empty, spending too many nights away from home, eating too many meals on the run, and neglecting their spiritual lives and physical well-being. But, despite recognizing that their habits are undermining their quality of life and ability to maintain long-term ministerial excellence, these pastors appear caught in a vicious cycle from which there appears to be no escape.[3]

This feeling of self-neglect is all too familiar to pastors who are called to be shepherds who smell like their sheep. We are called to lead them in the pastures of their spiritual journeys, and this process can sometimes become messy. I have resolved not to allow the ministry to infringe on what I deem God's call for all to "prosper and be in

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[2] Kirk B. Jones, *Rest In The Storm* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press Publishing, 2021), 1-2.

[3] Bruce Epperly, *A Center In the Cyclone Twenty-First Century Clergy Self-Care* (Lanham, MD: Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 27-28.

good health.” The kind of prosperity that I seek is mental, emotional, financial, and spiritual health.

Ministry in a pastoral fashion and with integrity has not always been easy. There are seasons when following God’s cues will lead to unfavorable denominational assignments. However, as an itinerate pastor, I learned that God’s ways come with the company of peace. Additionally, I am currently learning that letting God lead will open the doors for the desires of your heart. I am currently pastoring a 300-member congregation made up of mostly young adults. Youth and young adult ministry has always been my passion, and to witness God orchestrate this pastoral assignment is confirmation that with the years of famine also come years of feasts for those who trust in God.

I recently began pastoring the First University Church, a Seventh-Day Adventist congregation. The church was planted on the campus of the University of South Florida in Tampa, the second-largest University in Florida. The church is in Tampa proper, with a conglomerate of neighboring communities that make up Greater Tampa Bay in Florida.

Within our church's DNA is the mission to reach college students and equip them with spiritual tools to navigate their academic and professional lives. Many of the students we have impacted have gone on to graduate; some have gone on to pursue terminal degrees. Interestingly, these former students have remained active members of our congregation through the many different developmental stages of their lives. Some came in as single freshman students and are now active in our church leadership with families of their own. We have witnessed and have been associated with the growth of so

many people, and First University Church is blessed to be the beneficiary of their developing and developed gifts and their professional acumen.

In fourteen years of active pastoral ministry, I have never experienced this kind of energy in a worship center before my installation here at First University Church. I have pastored four church districts prior to this pastoral context, and I can honestly say that God slow-walked me into this season of my life along this pastoral journey in order that I would be appreciative of the gifts and grace that God bestowed for all those who choose to do it God's way. I have come to an awareness of colleagues who have taken their pastoral destinies into their own hands and have arrived at major pulpit assignments early in their careers through personal maneuvering and manipulations. I have also witnessed the kind of continued humanistic adjustments that they must undertake to remain there. It is my testimony so far that when God is responsible for getting you there, He will take on the responsibility of keeping you until your assignment is fulfilled.

I am determined to not only be a tool in God's bag but to be one of His "sharpest" tools. It is for this reason that I am currently enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program at the United Theological Seminary. I am endeavoring to develop and nurture certain pastoral competencies that will foster excellence in leadership. The development of old gifts and the unearthing of new spiritual gifts will cultivate an array of skills that will allow me to become a fully competent leader in any context and to become the premiere expert in my area of emphasis.

Context

The Seventh-day Adventist Denomination has its early roots in the Methodist Denomination. Seventh-day Adventists are descendants of the Wesleyan tradition in America. The Seventh-day Adventist Church's early beginning finds its genesis in the "Millerites Movement." The Millerites were followers of William Miller. The Millerites were men and women who were deeply focused on the accuracy of theology through a literal interpretation of the Bible. No American religious movement of the nineteenth century was immune from being heavily influenced by Methodists during the "Second Great Awakening" period. Some in American Church History have called this epoch, "the Methodist Age."[4] Like most newly formed religious movements, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was not an exception to their influence in practice and in theology.

The Adventist Church's formal structure remains Methodist, with certain changes in language and in the titles of the ecclesiastical offices. Like the Methodist, the Adventist Church has conferences that are regional in their geographical context. Seventh-day Adventists, too, have ecclesiastical offices; however, they differ in title. The Methodist adopted terms such as bishop, while the Seventh-day Adventist Church chose to keep the same function but embrace the title of president to move away from the Papal nomenclature as possible.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a global denomination with a regional geographical leadership structure that represents the constituencies within each level of regional geographical context. I pastor the First University Church, which is a constituent of the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The Southeastern Conference

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[4] Winthrop S. Hudson, "Methodist Age in America, Archives, and History," General Commission on Archive and History, https://archives.gcah.org/handle/10516/2843?show=full.

comprises 170 congregations with 56,079 constituents. Within this conference, the ecclesiastical territory covered begins in South Georgia and stretches to the southernmost parts of the Florida Keys.

The represented churches and constituent members of the Southeastern Conference are a part of the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (SDA). The Southern Union Conference of SDA is the administrative organization that shepherds all conferences within its geographical area. There are nine geographical unions within the next level of admirative leadership, which comprise the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The North American Division of SDA is the representative leadership organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for North America, which includes Canada, the United States of America, and parts of the Caribbean. The N.A.D. (North American Division) is one of thirteen divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide. These thirteen divisions and their delegates represent the executive leadership of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, affectionately known as the "World Church" among Seventh-day Adventists.

The Church's internal governance is representative in structure, with executive responsibility and authority assigned to its various entities and institutions and their respective constituencies, boards, and officers.[5] The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists consists of thirteen world Division Conferences, 132 Union Conferences, 626 local Conferences and Missions, and over 226,000 Churches.

[5] "Organizational Structure," North American Division of Seventh-Day Adventists, https://www.nadadventist.org/about-our-church/organizational-structure.

Seventh-Day Adventist pastors are "itinerate" by design. The length of pastoral assignment, on average, is between five and seven years. Pastors serve their congregations at the pleasure of conference presidents and are transferred at their prerogatives.

These cycles of windows of time present challenges for ministers who wish to make lasting impacts in their context of ministry. Anna Pannuzzo argues that it takes time, "3-5 years," to effect "long lasting positive change."[6] It is often the case that within a Seventh-day Adventist pastoral assignment, when changes begin to reap their benefits, a pastoral reassignment is voted by the Conference's Executive Committee. Churches that have gone through the stages of changing culture, revisioning processes, implementation, and measuring of changes made are often forced to adopt the new incoming minister's vision for a church. As a result, churches lose positive momentum, and pastors feel that their hard work has been trampled by the incoming pastor, making this scenario ripe for mission failure.

First University Church, in the last ten years, has experienced three pastoral changes. Each pastor has their own set of skills, spiritual gifts, and seasonal vision for this young adult church. While I tend to agree that renewing the vision is great for church ministry, it is apparent that having too many directions to a growing church within a small amount of time can lead to mass confusion and cause great conflict within the body of Christ.

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[6] Anna Pannunzzo, "It Can Take Three to Five Years to Create a Positive Change to Workplace Culture but Only a Couple of Days to Ruin It," LinkedIn, www.linkedin.com.

Furthermore, Anna Pannuzzo, reminds her readers, that "leaders who ignore 'workplace' (church) culture will create a toxic environment."[7] The context of a church that has had so many turnovers within so little time is an environment of duplicitous and even multiple cultures. Furthermore, without a leading culture, this kind of church context will be subjugated to proliferating toxicity. The Apostle Paul eradicated such an injurious mindset in his recorded correspondence with the Church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 3:6-8, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now the one who plants and the one who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor."[8]

There were two different leaders, two different missions, two different methodologies, and perhaps two different dueling cultures and factions in this one church. However, the Apostle Paul sought to unite the diverging and conflicting camps within the Church at Corinth by assigning them a uniting culture that everyone could adopt. "God gives the increase!" Whether one plants or waters, these symbolic terms represent two different pastoral seasons with one similar outcome, "but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor."

One of my passions is to unite. The pervasive theme of my spiritual autobiography is being overlooked. A byproduct of pastoral change, leadership change,

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[7] Anna Pannunzzo, "It Can Take Three to Five Years to Create a Positive Change to Workplace Culture but Only a Couple of Days to Ruin It," LinkedIn, www.linkedin.com.

[8] Biblical citations are from New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted, 1 Corinthians 3:6-8.

and change, in general, is the reality of the overlooked, the forgotten who hold tight to the previously adopted changes of times past.

Creating a culture of understanding for the missions of time past and executing the necessary changes of the present for the viability of the future is a possible nexus theme between my context and my passion. Celebrating the previous victories while simultaneously charting a new course that is complimentary to the former will lead to God ordained growth.

One important note in any contemporary context of ministry is Covid-19. Between the years of 2020 and the present is the reality of a pandemic that has affected the operation of ministries globally. Covid-19 has caused great tectonic shifts in the perception of how the church is to be conducted. COVID has caused the long-held traditions of the Church to be rethought and reimagined i.e., worship, Bible studies, fellowship dinners, pastoral visitations, etc.[9] In a short period of time, members have gone from full-time fellowship, in-person worship to 90% of churches have become purely virtual.[10]

First University Church was a part of the many churches that had to pivot early in the year 2020 to retain a modicum of active ministry. Relegated just to a modest staff on worship weekends, the technology and worship teams for one year functioned as the church. First University Church streamed virtually, utilizing several platforms to minister

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[9] Tom Gjelten, "'Things Will Never Be the Same:' How the Pandemic Has Changed Worship," NPR.org, https://www.npr.org/2020/05/20/858918339/things-will-never-be-the-same-how-the-pandemic-has-changed-worship.

[10] Claire Gecewicz, "Few Americans Say Their House of Worship is Open, But a Quarter Say Their Faith Has Grown Amid Pandemic," Pew Research Center, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/04/30/few-americans-say-their-house-of-worship-is-open-but-a-quarter-say-their-religious-faith-has-grown-amid-pandemic/.

through different mediums for different demographics. General and corporate worships were streamed on YouTube and Facebook. Wednesday night, Bible Studies and prayer meetings were streamed from the presenter's home on Facebook only. A prayer line was added, for our older saints who wanted to connect through Thursday corporate prayers. First University Church utilized Zoom for all its administrative and ministry meetings.

On par with the national averages provided by Pew Research Center, First University experienced the nuisances of operating during a pandemic. There were mishaps and potentially missed opportunities to take advantage of the novelty that COVID-19 to pivot to a more engaging ministry that focused on more than membership care within the walls of the building. However, there were lessons learned that benefited the overall structure and ministry of the church. Although Pew Research Center findings validate the anecdotal feelings of a closed church, COVID-19 allowed for First University media ministry to find footing in the homes of the membership and on their electronic devices within arm's reach.[11]

The early metrics used to measure the effectiveness of the virtual church were analytics of views from the virtual platforms. This method proved ineffective in measuring connectedness and membership engagement. Utilizing the Zoom platform to call membership meetings proved more fruitful in assessing real membership turnout and enjoyment. From administrative, ministry, and membership meetings to fellowship meetings, Zoom proved vital in determining the immediate health of our church.

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[11] Claire Gecewicz, "Few Americans Say Their House of Worship is Open, But a Quarter Say Their Faith Has Grown Amid Pandemic," Pew Research Center, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/04/30/few-americans-say-their-house-of-worship-is-open-but-a-quarter-say-their-religious-faith-has-grown-amid-pandemic/.

Additionally, the pandemic also created avenues for leaders of our church to make phone calls with the entirety of the membership to minister to them in a personal way never done before. This medium real-time updates on our church members, granting us access to the information of our members, their needs, and whereabouts during their time away from the church building. Our motto for the pandemic was, "The building is close, but the Church remains open!"

Interestingly, COVID-19 instituted a culture that is terrifying to the traditional church that depends on church attendees for viability. We have taught our membership over centuries the importance of "not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Heb. 10:25). We espoused a theology that gave way to fear for those who did not attend in person church. However, the pandemic gave way to a deeper study of "assembling ourselves together," and many began to assemble together virtually. This practice has become standard and continues presently. Our church notes that having come out of the lockdowns, pre-pandemic attendance numbers are proving to be elusive for First University Church.

The current post-pandemic context at First University Church is one for reimagination. Great resources have gone into recreating, rebranding, and revising a culture that will make ministry viable in this post-pandemic era while seeking new metrics to measure the health of our church. First University Church has shifted measuring sticks; we no longer pose the question, "Can our church be healthy with only 50% of our previous pre-pandemic members in attendance," to "What does total membership engagement look like?" First University Church is intentionally choosing to

answer the second question, and the response to the latter is a wholistic perspective of church health, that will lead to a new metric being discovered.

Ministry Journey

I have argued that my ministry journey began prenatally. I am the son and the grandson of preachers. God has laid the anointing for this third generation of pastors on me. My awareness of the calling was in my junior year of college. I was not serious about my studies and felt overlooked within the Department of Theology at Oakwood University. I noticed that my classmates who were perceptibly less gifted were getting more ministerial opportunities than me. Additionally, I was currently appealing my second probation due to academic reasons. I bargained with God, "If I am called to active ministry, get me back into school, and I will do my part." Providentially, the door was opened for my return, and I have never looked back.

Not only did God open the door to academic reinstatement, but miraculously, I was able to be admitted into an "accredited" seminary while still finishing my undergraduate degree. Furthermore, God opened the door to active ministry. I was given a position as the youth pastor of the Pontiac Southside SDA Church in Pontiac, Michigan, while serving as president of the prestigious Black Students Association of the Seminary.

I knew it was God! With every door opened, a new determination to serve God more fully was birthed in me. I have since never questioned God's calling on my life. Although my ministerial journey has been tumultuous at times, my conviction in my calling has never caused me to question the lessons to be learned in moments of adversity.

One of the major themes in my life has been feeling overlooked. This theme has become my passion. As previously mentioned, I am passionate about fighting for the "least, the lost, and the little." There is a spirit of social justice in my passion for ministry. I feel most fulfilled when helping those who are unable to help themselves. Additionally, this same passion administratively and organizationally drives me to seek to create positive cultures in church contexts that have plateaued or are on the decline. I am passionate about creating cultural changes that energize and give hope to dying churches that greater is in the future.

My ministerial journey has led me to explore my passion for youth and young adult ministry. Up until this last pastorate, I have always been the youngest person on the church's executive boards of the previous churches where I have served. Part of my perceived role was to always be an intermediary between parents and their children. To be a translator of culture between two foreign generations.

It is perhaps in God's wisdom that I have only pastored aging churches until First University Church. Being a source of advocacy for youth and young adults in a church environment that can be dissatisfying for them pushed me to become passionate about reaching out to a generation of church members who often feel more abducted than appreciated in their church contexts. The young people that I have pastored over the years in various contexts all had similar experiences; they feel unwelcomed in the arena of espousing ideas, they feel tolerated in the areas of their presence, and many have testified of being hurt by a church that is meant to be a place of healing.

The rigmarole of ministry has fostered indispensable pastoral experiences that have equipped me with the requisite tools and character for a positive impact on the lives

of those who have been placed along my journey. Everything that I have experienced has brought me to this point in ministry. God has orchestrated the symphony of this journey to have me arrive at this juncture in ministry after the necessary experiences of hardships, challenges, immovable personalities within ministry assignments, occasional failures, and exciting wins as a testament to God's will for my life. Although First University Church is not the pinnacle of my ministerial career, thus far, it has proven to be a breath of fresh air from what once was to a beacon of hope for what God has in store for my ministerial journey.

It is providential that my Doctor of Ministry project would be tested with quality control, having a congregation that fits the criteria of a perceived youth and young adult satisfaction problem within the mainstream church. It is also a blessing that an emphasis on strategic leadership in my studies would be the exact expressed need of the membership at First University Church. It is a synergistic convergence of my passions, ministry context, and experiences, as well as the needs and expectations of First University Church.

I believe that my passion, acquired skills, and innate enthusiasm for positive, lasting change will produce a Doctor of Ministry project that will contribute value in both the professional and academic arenas of ministry. The project's intended purpose is to equip churches and church leaders with tools to create cultures that encapsulate cross-generational church interests and spiritual needs.

Develop the Synergy

The intersection of my spiritual autobiography and contextual analysis has brought me to a unique problem. Given the rise of the "virtual church" due to COVID-19 and the need to rethink, reimagine, and re-envision both the church context and the packaging of its content, First University Church presents itself as an appropriate testing ground.

Present at First University Church is the potential for youth and young adults, who otherwise would not be given opportunities to contribute to such a church reboot, to become principal contributors in a process that necessitates ingenuity and creativity. Their lack of experience in the arena of the church becomes a strength as they will view this problem with unbridled optimism and with a healthy lack of fear of failure.

The stated problem is, "How does a church organization change or create a culture that is promotive, positive, and progressive within a culture of change cycles or after an unexpected church-defining phenomenon, i.e., COVID-19?" It has been my experience as an itinerate pastor to have effectively taken my church through cultural changes that reaped immediately, only to have the subsequent pastor pivot in a different direction. Or it has been my experience to follow a succession of pastors who have attempted to effect change only to have the church exhibit phobias and fatigue in relation to necessary changes in structure and culture.

My current context is a church that has invested financial resources and a considerable amount of time in being coached to alter their potential altitude by changing their culture and their current attitudes towards change. Developing the synergy between my journey and passion in accordance with the context milieu of denominational local

conference leadership and my assigned congregation. It is my belief that First University Church's motivation for a better charted lasting course will incentivize cooperation in this project.

This Doctor of Ministry Project will continue the work that was already started at First University Church. Perhaps some of the findings will reinforce already disseminated information or contradict it and serve as a pivoting point for real, successful cultural change. Additionally, this project will seek to create a research group that will become intimately acquainted with the stated problem and be involved in actively researching a possible solution. The highly educated subjects will enhance the qualitative research and provide more accurate findings.

Generally speaking, the content of this project will seek to decipher whether forced implementation through the successive seasons of itineracy or whether creating a culture of enthusiasm surrounding intentional change can create a more lasting, positive, and processive culture within the church. This means that the theory of three to five years remains as the standard measure for change, or the creation of an enthusiastic culture for missional change be the new measure for lasting, positive, and progressive change.

This problem is quite important for my context as an itinerant pastor. The Seventh-day Adventist pastor may not have three to five years to make an impact before being reassigned to a new church congregation, but perhaps a contagious enthusiastic change culture will create a ripple effect that is both linear and spherical—a change culture that is lasting and inclusive of all those within the church's sphere of influence.

Thus, I seek to observe which approach will reap the greatest outcome for pastors who have shortened ministry times with their congregations. Additionally, I seek to learn

how churches can continue on their progressive linear path while experiencing leadership and pastoral changes or whether it is more effective for pastors to remain in their assigned pastoral roles in executing the church's mission. Finally, this project seeks to learn how immediately a church can regain its ministry momentum following an altering church life event, such as COVID-19.

The responses to these queries will foster a context of growth and progressive change that is caught and not solely taught. This perspective project will uniquely qualify me to aid churches that have become stagnant along their church life cycles to reboot and reset. Identifying the responses to the stated problem in this Doctor of Ministry project will give insight into how to move this contextual church to viability post-pandemic and post-personnel change. The ultimate goal is to be one of the voices that add to the collegiality of scholars within this field of pastoral itinerancy and church mission study.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

This Biblical Foundation Chapter will consider the Seventh-day Adventist Church's denominational use of "pastoral itineracy " and highlight principles surrounding pastoral itineracy and/or pastoral assignments. The New Testament text cradles the foundation of the organized Church. A careful perusal of the Book of Acts and the Pauline epistles will illustrate an organizational structure and a vivid mission and vision for the newly established "ekklesia."

The proposed selected text is taken from the Apostle Paul's correspondence with the church in Corinth. The focus text is 1 Corinthians 3:6-11, which is taken from the first section of 1 Corinthians. There will be a thorough exploration of the cited biblical text, and evidence, both internal and external, will be given for reasons for the construction of this letter. However, the principal concern will be focused on the theme of pastoral itineracy and pastoral succession. For the sake of this chapter, "pastoral itineracy and pastoral succession" will be treated interchangeably in defining pastoral changes in the church.

The desired outcome is to have clear principles that apply to churches that have experienced, are experiencing, or will experience a change of leadership in pastoral

ministry in the future. These principles will become tools to equip both clergy and congregation for these seasons of change and succession.

1 Corinthians 3:6-11 states:

> I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Textual Background

Authorship, Date, and Provenance

There is no real argument against a Pauline authorship. Voluminous evidence and proof, both internal and external, point to the factual belief that Paul was engaged in some correspondence with individuals within the church in Corinth. Paul signs his usual authorship within the salutations of the letter and, throughout the correspondence, writes in the first-person singular, "I."

Equally adopted by most theologians, historians, and commentaries is the provenance of 1 Corinthians. Internal evidence in 1 Corinthians 16:8 suggests Ephesus as the city where this letter originated, composed, and sent. Paul states, "I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost."

However, there seem to be some disagreements about the year 1 Corinthians was written. One internal clue is that springtime is a potential season for the writing. In the

last chapter of this letter, Paul claims that he will remain in Ephesus "until Pentecost." This assertion suggests an Easter season in the spring.

As it relates to the year, the argument seems to circle around the timelines for Paul's second missionary journey and the length of his stays in Ephesus and Corinth. Some have hypothesized a date as early as the Spring of 53 AD all the way to a potential date of the Spring of 57 AD. Carson and Moo inject in school or thoughts surrounding the date of 1 Corinthians, "Paul wrote 1 Corinthian while he was in Ephesus, sometime before Pentecost (16:8), probably during his last year – that is, early 55."[1]

Occasion

Paul expeditiously states the reason for his writing, starting in 1 Corinthians 1:11, "For I have been informed concerning you, my brothers and sisters, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am with Paul," or "I am with Apollos," or "I am with Cephas," or "I am with Christ." Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"[2]

The explicit reasoning for the occasion of this letter is the reported schisms and factions within the body of believers in the church of Corinth. The history and context of the city of Corinth is problematic for the newly minted Christ followers. The Book of Acts provides background evidence that converted believers were being persecuted and

[1] D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo, *An Introduction to The New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 448.

[2] Biblical citations are from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise stated, 1 Corinthians 1:11-13.

prosecuted by those of traditional Judaism. Acts 18:12 describes the Jews who revolt against Paul because, according to verse thirteen, "persuading men to worship God contrary to the law."

It is the Apostle Paul's intent to write this letter to his "children" as their "spiritual father" because of the reports given to him by those of the house of Chloe and as a result of a visit from Stephanas and his friends. Internal evidence also seems to purport that the Apostle Paul was also responding to an earlier unrecorded correspondence between Paul and the Church. Carson and Moo contend that "Achaicus (16:17) brought not only the gift from the Corinthians but also the church's letter and their own verbal reports, which together establishes Paul's agenda as he wrote 1 Corinthians (which might be designated Corinthians B)."[3]

First Corinthians 5:9, "I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people," appears to suggest a series of correspondence prior to the canonized Corinthians epistles. Although Paul, the planter, is in Ephesus, he is in contact with his former church. Between his written letters and the receipt of potential letters in verse 1 Corinthians 16:17, the occasion for this letter generally is a response to news received from the Corinthian Church.

The Apostle Paul intends to utilize his epistolary authority, granted to him by reason of his office as Apostle of Jesus Christ, to instruct, correct, and guide this neophyte church. The following is the structural organization of the first "adopted" epistle to the church of Corinth. The chosen pericope fits within a larger body and is the

[3] Carson, *An Introduction to The New Testament*, 422.

basis for Paul's polemics on the previously discussed occasions and reasons for writing this letter to this audience.

Structure

I. Greeting - 1:1–3

II. Reproof: The Report of Sin In the Church - 1:4–6:20
   A. Divisions in the church—1:4–4:21
   B. Discipline in the church—5
   C. Disputes in the courts—6:1–8
   D. Defilement in the world—6:9–20

III. Instruction: The Reply To Their Questions - 7:1–16:12
   A. Marriage—7
   B. Food offered to idols—8–10
   C. Church ordinances—11
   D. Spiritual gifts—12:1–14:40
   E. The Resurrection—15
   F. The offering—16:1–12

IV. Conclusion - 16:13–24[4]

Words of Interest

Within the selected passage, 1 Corinthians verses six through eleven, there are eight key terms that the Apostle Paul intentionally utilizes to deliver his counsel to this Corinthian audience. Paul's judicious utilization of such key terms is therefore of great importance in unearthing the Apostle's teaching and understanding of pastoral itineracy, pastoral succession, and congregational responsibility.

1. ἐφύτευσα- (ephyteusa) taken from the root word φυτεύω, this verb is defined as "to plant." This term suggests the act of planting in the agricultural realm. Paul

[4]Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 567.

utilizes the verb in the aorist tense. This verb is in the first person, singular, and it is active with an indicative mood. The apostle is utilizing a familiar agriculture term to remind his audience that he, in earnest, planted this congregation, and the fruits of his labor are the church in Corinth.[5]

2. ἐπότισεν- (epotisen) By definition, epotisen, means to water, irrigate, or supply water. The etymological form of this verb is ποτίζω. This verb is in the aorist tense with an active voice and an indicative mood. The author of this text emphatically states that Apollos also contributed to this agricultural process and, for his part, is deserving of a reward.[6] Paul states that Apollos was responsible to irrigate and supply adequate water to the field. There is a sense of faithfulness to the required task.
3. ηὔξανεν- (euxanen) The third verb of verse 6 differs from the previous two verbs. This verb is in the imperfect tense and is active in voice, indicative in mood, and third person singular. The imperfect verb tense suggests an action that has yet to meet its completion. It is Paul's indication that God's agricultural responsibility is to cause the field to grow. This growth process is ongoing and appears to be in conjunction with the different "individual" agricultural assignments given by God.[7] Growth is connected to the faithful execution of the worker's specific tasks.

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[5] H. G. Liddell, *A Greek-English Lexicon Compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1863), 1584.

[6] Ceslas Spicq and James D. Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 146-147.

[7] Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistles to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 303.

4. κόπον- (kopon) In verse 8, Paul will define the kind of agricultural endeavors undertaken by Paul and Apollos as "κόπος." This noun is defined as productive work and physical labor that is done for wages. Κόπον is the accusative case of κόπος and the direct object of the verb λήμψεται, receiving a reward for their "harsh labor."[8]
5. συνεργοί- (synergoi) In verse nine, Paul is consolidating his polemics into a major theme. Συνεργός, is a noun defined as "fellow workers." This word describes the synergic work of people who are engaged in similar activities. The Greek declension is a noun, in the nominative case, and is plural in number. Nominatively, this noun refers to Paul's "to be" verb assertion, and therefore, an emerging theme potentially is "We are" (Paul, Apollos, Church, and God) synergistic in our fieldwork. "What we have is rather a theological statement: Paul and the rest are in the same service; they are all God's "helpers" and "handymen" (1 C. 3:9), and they are thus "workers" in the kingdom of God."[9]
6. γεώργιον- (geogrion) This neuter noun is defined as a cultivated field. It is more than just a field or pasture, rather, it is a field that has been intentionally cultivated. A field that actively continues to be cultivated by a farmer. Paul concludes his analogous discourse of the field and the fellow laborers with a theological declaration, "Θεού γεώργιον," the field belongs to God.[10]
7. This cultivated field that Paul mentions belongs to God.

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[8] Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek – English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Leuven, BE: Peeters, 2009), 407.

[9] Georg Bertram, Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 874.

[10] Thiselton, *The First Epistles to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text,* 303.

Theological Themes

There are four definable sections in Paul's first recorded letter to the church in Corinth. Chapter three is situated in the "Reproof" section of the letter. This section is further broken into several smaller divisions. The chosen pericope for the biblical foundation of this project is found within the "Reproof: Division in the Church" section of the larger structure.

No other epistle in the Pauline corpus exemplifies Paul's theology as well as the Corinthian correspondence. The Corinthian letters develop the "theology of the cross," which Carson and Moo argue "shapes Christian Ethics, Christian priorities, and Christian attitudes and thereby imitates Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).[11] This pragmatic theologian argues against factions and disagreements in the church of Corinth by emphasizing Christ and the Cross.

It is within this sub-division that the author of this letter puts forth his authoritative argument in response to the reported division currently proliferating in the church. Paul does this with the introduction of twin-themed arguments. Utilizing the imagery of both agriculture and construction, he argues that the only response to these kinds of divisions within the church is to view the church as either a farmed land or a building that is under construction. It is within this context that we see a development of theological themes that will be further explored in the biblical text.

Theme number one, Paul's agriculture analogy, intends to demonstrate that Paul, who founded the church in Corinth, "planted" the church. Apollos, who continued in the teaching ministry in the church in Corinth, "watered" and continued the work of

[11] Carson, *An Introduction to The New Testament,* 428.

irrigation. The cultivated "field" is the identity of the church in Corinth. It was planted, watered, and cultivated; however, God is determined to be the acting agency in the growth and fruition process of the field.[12] He is advocating for an "all God sufficiency" theme. Nothing or no one matters other than God!

Considering the contrived divisions, it is important to note that the accent of verses six through nine is on the God who both "causes the growth of the field" and "God who owns the field." The budding theme is focused on a God who owns the field and causes it to continue to grow in the light of fragmentation within the body of believers. Additionally, there is a well-defined juxtaposition. He presents an all-active God opposite of the individually heralded Paul, Apollos, and the field.

Both Paul and Apollos are of no consequence in relation to the outcome of the field. They are merely servants and workers who are tasked with different assignments in tending to the field. They are contributing factors, while God is the causing factor in the growth process.

Paul plants, and Apollos waters and irrigates. Together, they synergistically work in God's field to cultivate according to the needs of the field and the demands of God. Gordon Fee contends, "The analogy itself therefore functions both to affirm the ministry of Apollos and to put Paul and Apollos on equal footing from the perspective of their mutual servanthood."[13]

Paul's intention is to quelch the arguments of divisions by presupposing that workers in the field are on par with each other. They are primary workers working in

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[12] Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 141.

[13] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 141.

synergy in the same field. His argument moves the Corinthians' fixation away from the contributing workers and places it on the one who causes the growth and owns the field, which is God.

Also juxtaposed to God, the cause of growth and the owner of the field, is the field. In verse nine, Paul utilizes the verb to be, to clarify the designated persons and functions of this analogy. “ἐσμεν” συνεργοί, this verb is in the first-person plural, we are co-workers; the Apostle is referring to Apollos and himself as co-workers or co-laborers. “*ἐστε*” γεώργιον, is a same verb “to be” that is in the second-person plural. Interestingly, the direct object of this verb is ἐστε *“γεώργιον,”* (field), and it is a noun that is in singular number. Conclusively, the field is the singular designation of the plural second person, “you,” who happens to be the audience of this letter. The make-up of this singular field is intended to be one audience of many to whom this letter is being addressed.

Paul’s clear wordplay intends to implicitly rebuke divisions. They are many individuals but are one field. The apostle’s argument is that individual members are aligned and united in their singular possessed designation. God’s field is made up of many that are united in whom they belong. What makes them one is different than what divides them. They are divided by their allegiances to their preferred ministers; however, they are united because of who owns them. Paul is encouraging them to focus on that which unites them, for that which unites them is greater than that which divides them.

Further advancing the theme of Christ’s sole sufficiency, the Apostle Paul contends that the co-laborers of the field, Paul and Apollos, and the field, the Corinthian Church, are “all” God’s possessions. Additionally, it was previously stated that God is the cause of the growth. Paul is advancing an argument that the Owner of the field is

responsible for everything, the co-laborers, the field, and the growth of the field. Fee similarly argues this point, "Focus on God alone, for God alone saves and sanctifies - it is only God who makes things grow!"[14]

The second analogy of an ongoing building construction is Paul's way of introducing the theme of building upon a Christocentric foundation—not just any foundation, but one that is germane to their existence. Paul previously laid and planted this foundation. We are God's building ἐστε οἰκοδομή." Paul utilizes the verb "to be" in the first-person plural to indicate that he is speaking inclusively of all members of the Corinthian congregation.

Furthermore, the Greek word, "οἰκοδομή" suggests an ongoing construction, the building up of a structure or even a person. Similarly to the agricultural land of verses six through eight, there is an imperfect sense that the growth of the field and the completion of the building is ongoing.

Paul's choice of the first-person plural to be and the direct object "οἰκοδομή singular number" provides insight into his argument that out of many, we are one. We, plural, are one singular building project—a project that seemingly has not come to its perfect completion, and Paul would argue that this is due to their carnal mindset, as expressed in their divisive parlance.

In the second analogy, Paul reminds his readers again of his apostleship authority as a result of his contribution to this building project. Verses nine through eleven serve as a basis for reminding the Church of Corinth of Paul's activity as a planter (five through

[14] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 142.

eight) and founder, giving him license to address the Corinthian church's ongoing divisions, even though pastoral leadership has changed.

Referring to himself, Paul describes his activity as a "wise, master builder." Through the grace given to him by God, he reminds his audience that he is responsible for the foundation that was laid at Corinth, further establishing his reasons and authoritative rebukes in this correspondence. This continued nuanced argument presupposes that Paul's foundational activity in Corinth is a result of the grace of a beneficent God who could have chosen anyone to lay the foundation. However, he also reminds the readers that there is no special quality resident in Paul for laying the initial foundation. Implicit in this argument is the reality that he who lays the foundation does so as the result of the grace of God, and whoever comes after will similarly build upon it because of the grace of God. Piercing from his rhetorical argument is the familiar theme of God's sufficiency. God's grace provided the opportunity for those who laid the foundation and those who were tasked to build upon it.

Paul's self-declaration as "wise master-builder," is qualified in verse eleven. Paul equates the foundation of the building to Jesus Christ, which should serve to be the building block of this ongoing construction project. The wisdom of this "master builder," is the spiritual, cognitive selection of Christ alone as the essence of the foundation for this building project. Paul does not elect to select philosophy, persuasive personality type, or the traditions of men as a foundation, but according to verse eleven, he rather chooses Jesus Christ as the sole foundation for this building project.

A secondary tangential argument could be made because of the definition of "οἰκοδομή." οἰκοδομή could also be defined as the ongoing building up of a person's

character. Previously, in this same section of this letter (verses one through four), Paul refers to them not as “spiritual” but rather as “carnal.” Yet in the salutation section of this letter, Paul calls them “sanctified in Jesus,” those who are “called saint.” Perhaps Paul, in a pastoral fashion, is calling on the Corinthian church members to continue to grow spiritually and that they, too, individually, are a work in progress. Currently, they are carnal, but they are destined to be “Saints.” Very much like the collective congregation, they are engaged in an ongoing building of their spiritual characters both as a group and as individuals.

These two themes, “God’s personal growing field” and “God’s unfinished active construction or building project,” suggest God's active, autonomous actions. Paul’s polemics advance a theological framework that defines the theocratic currency of the church’s governance. God’s will always supersede the active work of men. God calls the leadership of the local congregation and the universal church to cultivate God’s field and build up His building.

The ascribed tasks of the leaders of the church are explicitly described, and their inferred limits are delineated. He owns the field, and the construction project sets boundaries for the leaders and workers of the Church. Paul’s theological understanding is that men cannot own that which belongs to God. The human agencies are working in synergy with their fellow co-workers and the collected field or construction site at the behest of only the owner, God. This theological understanding suggests that those who lead do so by the grace afforded to them by the rightful owner: not the members, nor the planters, nor the irrigations, nor those who lay the foundation or build upon the foundation, but God.

Historical and Social Context

Historically, Paul's letter to the Corinthians was meant to be read by the religious audience. The city of Corinth benefited from its geographical location, which contributed to commercial and religious heterogeneous makeup.[15] There were many commercial influences stemming from the battering of trades and goods to the battering of philosophies and ideas. Likewise, as a freedmen colony, people seeking to improve their lives converged on Corinth, bringing a diversity of religious beliefs. It was common for the citizenry to self-identify according to their philosophies and religious identity.

Paul's confession that he laid a foundation that was founded in Jesus Christ, His life, teaching, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension suggests a rejection of anything or anyone other than that which was laid as their foundation. The common marketplace bartering of ideas and philosophies based upon the strength and eloquence of those who promulgated them was in stark contrast with the unique religious Christian belief that focused on the centrality of Christ and not those who preached Christ.

Historically, the same people who belonged to the Christian Church of Corinth would also be in community with the citizens of Corinth; however, Paul argued that they would distinguish themselves by not promoting a philosophy or a philosopher but rather by promulgating Jesus Christ, the center of their faith, which was antithetical to Corinthians.[16]

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[15] J. Paul Sampley, *The New Interpreters Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002), 773.

[16] Sampley, *The New Interpreters Bible Commentary,* 774.

Wealth and status contributed in parts to some of the schisms in the Corinthian Church. In Corinth, historically, there were similarities between both Corinth the city and Corinth the church. In as much as there were conflicts in Corinth, the city, the same kind of conflicts can also be traced in the church.[17] One century after the time of Paul, First Clement describes a Corinthian Church that is still experiencing internal strife.[18]

The root cause of the historical strife in both the church and the city of Corinth was caused by social and economic status. These differences in the Corinthian Church mirrored the city of Corinth and the highlighted socioeconomic differences were causes for divisions. The "Steep and social pyramid" that was typical of that culture, very few believers were rich, and most were poor (1 Cor 1:26)."[19] As freedmen, the Corinthian colony provided opportunities for the elevation of socioeconomic status through the arts, philosophies, and religion.

The social component found within the internal church divisions of 1 Corinthians chapter three can be attributed to members who are justling for elevation within the church, similar to those who are heralding differing philosophies in an effort to ascend the striated socioeconomic ladder within the community of Corinth. Perhaps Paul's admonishments within this correspondence could also be viewed from this pervasive social conflict that is pervasive in the community. He is rebuking the glorification of heralded differences, and thus, he is also rebuking the "carnal" nature of Corinth, the city that has made its way into Corinth, the church. Additionally, Paul is also rebuking

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[17] Sampley, *The New Interpreters Bible Commentary,* 777.

[18] Thomas J. Herron, *Clement and the Early Church of Rome on the Dating of Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2008), 10.

[19] Sampley, *The New Interpreters Bible Commentary,* 777.

perceived hierarchy within the body with the reproof that all (planters, cultivators, filed, and construction projects) are of no consequence (1 Cor. 3:7) and only God, who owns and is the active agent for growth and for building, is of material importance. This argument of Christocentric has been characterized as the resocialization of the church of Corinth.[20]

Summary

First Corinthians 3:6-11 as a chosen pericope, primarily treats the discussions and divisions concerning the different leaderships in the Corinthian church. Historically, Paul is identified as the responsible party for the inception of the church in Corinth. Acts 18:17 describes Paul's amanuensis for 1 Corinthians, Sosthenes (1 Cor. 1:1), as being a leader in the Synagogue in Corinth and Apollos, a Jew who was "mighty in the scriptures" according to Acts 18:24, as a leader in the church in Corinth. (1 Cor. 3:6).

Paul attempts to "re-socialize" the congregation, whose make-up is mostly Gentile and who are divided along socioeconomic status, by admonishing them to find commonality in the pervasive theme of God's supreme sufficiency. It is within this context that a secondary unintentional principle can be unearthed. There seems to be an undergirded theme of pastoral succession, whether intended or not, which provides a set of principles for the transfer of congregational leadership in light of different pastoral gifts, congregational needs, and God's ultimate designated will, in the appropriation of pastoral synergistic work.

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[20] Sampley, *The New Interpreters Bible Commentary*, 778.

In concise fashion, Paul's principle on pastoral succession simply states that God has a designated will for each worker. He will assign some to plant and others to cultivate. Each work is necessary for the health of the field. Appropriate seed planting must consider seasons, proper soil, and geographically appropriate seeds. Additionally, cultivating the field requires intentionality, purpose, and knowledge.

There is also a third component, the field. The workers represent successive and differing pastoral roles, and the field represents the congregation that belongs to God. The field may find wisdom in its preferences and perceived introspection needs. However, God, who owns the field, will assign workers whose gifts He deems fit the field's needs for that specific season.

Furthermore, in Paul's second analogy of 1 Corinthians chapter 3:6-11, he contends not only that God is still the owner but that there was a logical or wise building plan. The wisdom of the master builder builds a foundation that is only compatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and calls for the forthcoming successive levels to be built compatibly with its pre-existing foundation. Implicit in this admonishment is the warning of incompatibility as well as the tendency to destroy that which is already in existence. Paul's germane argument is that every successive level must be built in accordance with its previous foundational level, which finds its material footing in the original foundation of Jesus Christ.

Paul's conclusion seems to be that overall, it is God's responsibility to ensure the growth and harvest of the field and the completion of the construction (building) project. It is also the workers' and field's responsibility to create a synergistic atmosphere where

the human agencies complement each other, and the Divine agency is responsible for completing the work to its perfected end.

Conclusion

This principle of pastoral succession provides insight into denominational itineracy. The Seventh-day Adventist denomination has a practice of "pastoral itineracy." This practice supposes that denominational leadership assumes the responsibilities of making pastoral appointments and pastoral transfers.

Studies demonstrate that typically, within the SDA denomination, a pastoral appointment's average at three years per assignment.[21] This reality has become problematic for denominational leadership, local congregational pastors, and SDA congregations. This project seeks to illuminate principles that will foster a more palatable process. This palatable process will create a more harmonious, synergistic atmosphere at each level of denominational operation. The desired process will foster a level of trust, respect, and worth for the local congregation, as together, they work to fill congregational needs with a pastoral skillset are complements one another.

Likewise, denominational leadership must ensure that the pastoral appointment meets the needs of the local congregation and functions in synergy with the previous pastoral leadership of that congregation. The co-laborers must ensure that their work is not contradictory and that it is consistent with the direction, vision, and mission of the local congregation.

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[21] Monte Sahlin and Carmen Rusu, "Pastoral Ministry in Seventh-day Adventist Congregations Today," Faith Communities Today, https://circle.adventistlearningcommunity.com/files/icm/nadresearch/PastorMinistries.pdf.

Ultimately, the success of the pastoral successions or the practice of pastoral itineracy cannot be quantified in human metrics but rather must be qualitatively measured. God's increase in the field and God's completion of the building should be measured in terms of the health of the church. Paul's argument is that a healthy church is not carnal, but it is spiritual.

Furthermore, God's will is for the diversity of gifts in the pastoral leadership role to enrich the local congregation to build up upon the pre-existing foundation of Jesus Christ. Overall, this process appears as individuals who are united in Christ, working together in different capacities, finding value in the uniqueness of their successive leaders, and attributing their human understanding of success solely to God, while God honors their faithfulness with His reward, which is the human understanding of success, and increases in numerical attendance, financial growth, and reach of impact.

Finally, the desired outcome of this project is to raise awareness of pastoral wholeness within pastoral itineracy in hopes that the Seventh-day Adventist modus operandi regarding pastoral itineracy may evolve. The human understanding of success is evident in the denominational decision-making process regarding pastoral appointments. Ultimately, I hypothesize that reframing success in men's eyes to God's perspective will lead the denominational leadership to also include "Spiritual Health" as a contributing factor in pastoral assignments.

C. K. Barret, adding to the scholarship of this letter, focuses on 1 Corinthian 3:22 to advance the potential notion that the mention of Cephas (Peter) is reason enough to believe him as being another person who may have ministered in the Corinthian

context.[22] Paul's main argument in 1 Corinthians 3:6-11, 22 is that success is not quantitative but qualitative. Paul's, Apollos', Cephas' success, although tangible, paled in God's responsibility for the increase. A healthy church, a "spiritual" church, will not only focus on metrics and measurements but also on spiritual health. Implicit in the Apostle's argument is that a healthy church, a spiritual church, will experience God's active growth activity, which will result in numerical success that is rooted in God's doing.

[22] Charles K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistles to the Corinthians* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1968), 87.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist Church as a denomination has a practice of Pastoral Itineracy. This project seeks to examine the "why" of pastoral itineracy within the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination not only as a theory but also as a practice. The discovery of the theory will serve to equip the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist church with proper adaptation of pastoral itineracy for a more relevant and contemporary practice for a more relevant and contemporary context.

Walter G. Muelder, while espousing the virtues of pastoral itineracy in his book, says, "It makes possible a periodic review of effectiveness; the best matching of problems and personnel; the security of professional tenure if not in a particular church, then at least in the conference; a town, city, county, district, and conference-wide strategy for assessing problems and building programs; and introduction of new talent and ideas in difficult situations. With a prophetically strong bishop and an alert, committed cabinet of district superintendents, the itinerant system linked to a well-conceived connectional program can accomplish a great deal."[1]

[1] Walter George Muelder and Methodist Church (U.S.). Board of Social and Economic Relations, *Methodism and Society in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1961), 252.

Biblically and historically, this practice can be traced to the ecclesiastic leadership of the first-century Church found in the Book of Acts. In terms of protestant pioneer practices, Pastoral Itineracy was championed by John Wesley, George Whitfield, and, more recently, slave field preachers. Currently, this is an adopted ongoing practice in the Methodist and Seventh-day Adventist denominations. While there may be other denominations who participate in this practice, we will focus on the historical practices of the Methodist, Seventh-day Adventist Denominations, and the nineteenth century African American slave preachers.

Ignorance of history is to be bound to repeat past mistakes. Unearthing the reasons and the theory for the practice of itineracy is beneficial to the current Seventh-day Adventist Church and the future of pastoral ministry in the denomination. Such a project will lead to proper understanding for the pastor, congregation, and denominational leadership in the undertaking of pastoral appointments. Therefore, there is a need for an unbiased review of the practice itself. Although practices are apt to change, principles remain the same. The goal of this project is to review the principles and redefine the practice through a proper survey of the historical practices of pastoral itineracy.

The history of the practice of pastoral itineracy within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination may be traced back to the church pioneer's theological framework for pastoral ministry. J. N. Loughborough, a Seventh-day Adventist pioneer, in his book, *The Church: Its Organization, Order, and Discipline,* discusses the biblical leadership designation of ecclesiastic leadership.[2]

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[2] J. N. Loughborough, *The Church: Its Organization, Order, and Discipline* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1907), 127.

Dr. Russell Burrill paraphrases Loughborough's conclusion in his book, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to The Life and Mission of The Local Church* by stating, "As part of the struggle for organization in the early 1860s, a document was prepared to form the basis for the organization of the General Conference. In this document, two classes of church officers are delineated. First there are those called especially by God, the apostles and evangelist. Second are lay positions appointed by the church: elders, bishops, pastors, and deacon."

> According to this document, these early Adventist pioneers placed the pastor, along with local elders and deacons, as part of the lay leadership of the church, thereby limiting the clergy to the roles of apostle and evangelist. Amazingly, this is the basic structure that we have discovered in the early Christian church of the first century.[3]

Early Seventh-day Adventist pioneers referred to the clergy by biblical function, attributing titles based on the Pauline epistles to the church in Ephesus and Titus. Their hermeneutics associated being sent out as the work of the "apostle" and "evangelist." The organized work, at the conference level, sends out "apostles" and "evangelists." It was in the local church context that elected lay ministers were elders, bishops, or overseers.

The early Adventist model championed unsettled pastors who prioritized evangelism as they were sent to virgin frontiers. This is the denominational framework for the adoption and adaptation of itinerate ministry. The emphasis is less on church care/pastoral care and more on evangelism and growing interest in the church. Lay ministers were charged with pastoral and congregational care. The term pastor can be

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[3] R. C. Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to The Life and Mission of The Local Church* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1998), 152.

traced to the Greek “poimen” which signifies “herdsmen” or keeper of the sheep or flock.[4]

Somewhere along the line of denominational history, Adventist ministers became settled, perhaps by way of natural order following the organization of the denomination. The order of clergy function intermarried, and clergy were assigned to function in the pastoral role within the denominational context. The contemporary model of itineracy is a hybrid of the apostolic/evangelist and pastor/bishop/elder roles identified in the epistles of Ephesians and Titus.

Pastoral Itineracy is the practice of denominational leadership appointing pastors to local church congregations. The term in ecclesial milieus refers to the commitment of pastors to go and serve wherever and whenever denominational leadership decides to appoint the pastor and to serve for the determined span of time chosen by the denominational leadership. There are many factors that are involved in the practice of pastoral appointments, within the broader scope of pastoral itineracy. Typically, the bishop in the Methodist Church and or the president in the Seventh-day Adventist Church will appoint a pastor to their congregational context after prayerful consultation with their appropriate leadership boards.

The major factors that are to be deliberated are the needs of the congregation, life cycles of the congregation, and receptivity to change within the congregation. Additional to the congregational context, denominational leadership factors the context of the pastor. Some pastoral factors in the pastoral intenerate practice when making appointments are

[4] Loughborough, *The Church: Its Organization, Order, and Discipline*, 129.

the pastor's pastoral gifts, ministerial passions, family context, and receptivity to the proposed assignment.

The average pastoral tenure for an appointment in the Methodist denomination is five to seven years and three to five years for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.[5] Interestingly, John Crotts wrote in the "Southern Equip," a publication of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in an article entitled "The Selfish Reason To Stay At The Same Church For A Long Time" When A Pastor Remains At The Same Church For A Long Time, The Church Flourishes. So Does The Pastor," the average length of a Protestant pastor in America is four years.[66] It appears that both the itinerate and the more stabled pastor, on average have similar lengths of tenures.

The controversy surrounding the practice of pastoral itineracy is not the appointment, but the practice facilitated as a result of pastoral appointments which set shorten time frames for pastoral tenures. Universally, pastoral tenures average five years or more; however, there seems to be a dilemma surrounding the shortened lengths of tenures of pastoral appointments within the itinerant context. The practice of itineracy refers to the commitment of the pastor to submit to the will of their leadership in relations to pastoral appointments; however, there is growing conversation surrounding the length of the appointments, in fairness to the congregation and to the pastor.

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[5] Andrew Conard, "How Does the Appointment Process in the United Methodist Church work?,"Andrewconard.com**,** https://andrewconard.com/2012/03/21/how-does-the-appointment-process-in-the-united-methodist-church-work/#:~:text=United%20Methodist%20pastors%20are%20appointed,7%20years%20at%20one%20location; Monte Sahlin and Carmen Rusu, "Pastoral Ministry in Seventh-day Adventist Congregations Today," Faith Communities Today, https://circle.adventistlearningcommunity.com/files/icm/nadresearch/PastorMinistries.pdf.

[6] John Crotts, "The Selfish Reason to Stay at the Same Church For a Long Time: When a Pastor Remains at the Same Church for a Long Time, the Church Flourishes, So Does the Pastor," Southern Equip, https://equip.sbts.edu/article/selfish-reason-stay-church-long-time/#:~:text=The%20average%20length%20of%20service,far%20less%20than%20four%20years.

It is out of this larger conversation that a need for rediscovering the "why" in pastoral itineracy is birthed and relevant in redefining a more contextualized practice for the modern-day itinerate pastor and for pastoral care. The term pastoral itineracy is not to be taken as synonymous with pastoral appointment. In this chapter, we will define pastoral appointments within the scope of the practice of pastoral itineracy. The question to be answered is, can pastors within the itinerate practice be appointed to congregations for longer periods and experience the desired outcome from shorter tenures?

It is important to note, while treating pastoral itineracy and, more specifically, pastoral tenure and assignments, that this subject cannot be inextricably separated from the general practice of pastoral ministry and pastoral care. There is a daily toll of ministry; William Willimon says, "Before the altar of God, at the bedside of the sick, in conversation with troubled souls, befuddled before the biblical text, there is the pastor. Standing in that fateful intersection between God's people and God, at that risky transaction between Christ and his Body, the church, stands the priest."[7]

Pastoral ministry is involved in almost every fabric of our societies and daily journeys. At some point, everyone will come into the purview of a minister, albeit at a wedding ceremony, funeral, baptism, community event, political rally, or in certain denominationally operated health institutions, walking the hallways offering hope and prayer and, in some cases, even the delivery room in the hospital nursery wings.

Pastoral ministry is "not an easy vocation. This calling is full of peril," which requires the minister to serve the community in various ways.[8] Ministers are counselors,

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[7] William H. Willimon, *The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2016), 11.

[8] Willimon, *The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*, 12.

guides, prophets, biblical scholars, community leaders, and congregational leaders. They are the living embodiments of the religious ideas that are theologically transferred through teaching and preaching.

This broad caricature of pastoral ministry and pastoral care can be further broken down into sub-communities. In a more acute context, my reality is one of color. Dr. Stephanie Hampton Credle adds to the already expressed defined role of the pastor, "Pastors are positioned to influence congregations because of the legitimacy afforded to them by virtue of their calling and the structure of the church."[9] Dr. Credle further explores the role of the African American Church within its community as having "played a significant role in the lives of its members. African Americans depend strongly on their church affiliations for support and tend to have a higher degree of church attendance than white church members.[10]

The black church experience is a sample of the collective African American experience. J. Deotis Roberts Sr. contends, "Our heritage is rich in folk tales, sermons, literature, and art. Undergirding all forms of black expression, oral, written, or dramatic is the quality of "soul."[11] That out of the worship experience is the foundation for everything the "Black Church" does. "In worship the minister helps illuminate the 'I/we' confrontation with God. The protestant minister finds the best opportunity to do this in

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[9] Stephanie Hampton Credle*, That's My Pew: Resolving Conflict in the African American Church* (Belleville, ON: Essence Publishing, 2017), 44.

[10] Credle, *That's My Pew: Resolving Conflict in the African American Church*, 17.

[11] J. Deotis Roberts, Sr., "Black Theology in the Making," *Review and Expositor* 70, no. 3 (August 1973): 323, doi:10.1177/003463737307000305.

preaching."[12] This centrality of preaching in the black experience is also central to the itinerate preacher and the preaching circuit.

Handed down from other Protestant traditions, the black preacher or the itinerate pastor is accustomed to ministry that is more kinetic than static in its context. The totality of the aforementioned aspects in pastoral ministry and pastoral care is also included in the duties of the itinerate pastor, and within shortened determined pastoral tenure, itinerate pastors are challenged to establish this kind of pastoral care and ministry.

Survey of Methodist Church Pioneers and Historical Practice of Itineracy:

The "whole world is my parish" was John Wesley's preaching philosophy. He theorizes that more access to a variety of individuals would benefit the propulsion of the gospel. For John Wesley and others in the early Methodist movement, the practice of itinerancy or circuit/field preaching began as a necessary good to gain access to a collective of people after being "systematically denied access to the Church of England pulpits," during the First Great Awakening period.[13] This unorthodox approach gained Wesley new access to prospective congregants for the purpose of facilitating the promulgation of the Word of God in England. Untethered access in the fields leads the gospel to become mobile. As an itinerate preacher, John Wesley's understanding and teachings were passed down to the parish of the unforgotten. It appears that John Wesley

[12] Roberts, "Black Theology in the Making," 323.

[13] Ian J. Maddock, *Men of One Book: A Comparison of Two Methodist Preachers John Wesley and George Whitefield* (Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 2012), 36.

was “highly deliberate” in his itinerate preaching to target centers and regions that were plagued with significantly higher “economically disadvantaged,” individuals.[14]

The thrust for itinerate preaching focused not only on the “systematic” refusal of access to the Church of England; however, to access the growing centers of population that the Church of England was not reaching, but this practice became necessary for itinerate field preachers.

This practice received considerable criticism from the Church of England and from members of the public. In his 1745 journal entry, John Wesley described the dangers of itineracy in its infancy.

> Fri. 3 In the evening we came to Wednesbury. A while ago the waves' here were 'mighty and raged horribly. But the Lord that dwelleth on high is mightier,' and has stilled the madness of the people." I preached at seven without any noise or hindrance at all. All was equally quiet on Saturday. Sun. 5. The number of people even at five obliged me to preach abroad. About one I preached at Tipton Green, and about four at Wednesbury. A few persons at first threw some clods, but they were quickly glad to retreat, so that there was no interruption at all while I applied those gracious words of our Lord, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. I made haste from hence to Gosta Green, near Birmingham, where I had appointed to preach at six. But it was dangerous for any who stood to hear, for the stones and dirt were flying from every side, almost without intermission, for near an hour. However, very few persons went away. I afterwards met the society and exhorted them, in spite of men and devils, to continue in the grace of God.[15]

Like John Wesley, George Whitefield was an early champion of itinerate field preaching. In a 1739 letter describing one of Whitefield’s preaching services, William Seward in his correspondence with a James Hutton wrote, “We had yesterday the finest sight at Kingswood… our Dear Br…preached to such a Multitude as no man could

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[14] Maddock, *Men of One Book*, 67.

[15] W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater. *The Works of John Wesley Vol. 20: Journals and Diaries III 1743-53* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 64-65.

Number, perhaps 4 or 5000 and all so quiet that all might hear. There were persons on Horseback and several Coaches—The Hedges lined the Trees served for Scaffold as the Sycamore did to Zacheus—since the Apostles Days has not been the like."[16]

Both Whitefield and John Wesley found a scriptural foundation for the practice of field preaching, which became the forerunner of the "Itinerate Pastoral" ministry. John Wesley and other field preachers felt compelled to evangelize in areas that the Orthodox church had not reached. As a result, John Wesley suffered greatly. However, for John Wesley, not preaching was not an option. He reasoned that it was better to obey God than man.

> "So I submitted to be more vile." The more we ponder these words the more closely do we draw to the John Wesley of that moment; the more moving do they become. The old props upon which he had relied were falling around him, and no man can endure that sight and sensation with entire equanimity. There is a note of pathos in the words, as though he had stooped to something of which one part of him was ashamed. The Oxford scholar and don, with his inherited aristocratic instincts and ingrained respect for what was regular and constitutional, had become a 'field preacher', a man beyond the pale of the regular ministry, knowing that the hand of authority would be increasingly heavy against him; that he would forfeit the regard and friendship of many of his own order; that he was making himself a fool for Christ's sake.[17]

Wesley's polemics are founded in his principal belief that this practice, though shunned by the church orthodoxy, was approved, and commanded by God. John Wesley's method can be traced in the organizing principles of the Methodist Church, and vestiges of this practice have given way to the itinerate pastor, where no "one" pastor is solely responsible for a single parish. In reflection, John Wesley wrote, "Suffer me now to tell you my principles in this matter. I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I

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[16] David A. Smith, "George Whitefield as Inter- Confessional Evangelist, 17-14-1770" (DPhil diss., Oxford University, 1992).

[17] W. L. Doughty, *John Wesley: Preacher* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1955), 37.

mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvations."[18]

Bound by God to preach wherever he finds himself to be. He is not tied to one parish, and neither are the fields tied to just one preacher, as evident in the public ministry in the Kingswood where both Whitefield, Wesley, and others preached in the fields.

This practice continued in America in the mid-1800s. Bishop Francis Asbury, the first Methodist bishop in America, traveled 270,000 miles on horseback as a circuit rider, his motto being, "We must reach every section of America, especially the raw frontiers. We must not be afraid of men, devils, wild animals, or disease. Our motto must always be FORWARD!"[19] This practiced motto led to a church membership of more than a million members through the riding circuit ministry of 4,000 ministers.[20] They were following the earlier field preaching of the eighteenth century.

Itineracy became a method of evangelism for reaching regions that were unaffected with the gospel. The life of the itinerate minister prior to 1847 resulted diminutive life expectancy. "Nearly half of the Methodist circuit riding preachers died before the age of 30."[21] Ministers rarely served longer than two years on the same

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[18] Helmut Nausner and J. Steven O'Malley, "The Meaning of Wesley's General Rules: An Interpretation," *The Asbury Theological Journal* 44, no. 2 (1989): 45, https://place.asburyseminary.edu/asburyjournal/vol44/iss2/5.

[19] Joe Iovino, "The Hard Road of A Methodist Circuit Rider," UMC, https://www.umc.org/en/content/the-hard-road-of-a-methodist-circuit-rider.

[20] Joe Iovino, "The Hard Road of A Methodist Circuit Rider," UMC, https://www.umc.org/en/content/the-hard-road-of-a-methodist-circuit-rider.

[21] Joe Iovino, "The Hard Road of A Methodist Circuit Rider," UMC, https://www.umc.org/en/content/the-hard-road-of-a-methodist-circuit-rider.

circuit.[22] The organization of the church in America was created for ministers to remain in their circuits longer. Ministers, on average, now remain in their church district "circuit" per average of four years in the Methodist Church, as previously cited.

Survey of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and Historical Practice of Itineracy:

Much like the Methodist Church, the Seventh-day Adventist church experienced an evangelistic explosion in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. In part because the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not have settled ministers prior to its official organization in the year 1863. Even though itineracy was successful in the growth of the denomination, the Seventh-day Adventist church ministers functioned as itinerate evangelists, even after officially organizing. James White, a Seventh-day Adventist Church pioneer, described the pastoral ministry of SDA ministers in these words. "We have no settled pastors over our churches, but our ministers are all missionaries, as were the early ministers of Jesus Christ. Consequently, they are most of their time deprived of the blessings of home."[23]

Adventist Itineracy was adopted into practice as a reason of practicality. Seventh-day Adventist pastors were employed as single vocational ministers, and because of small-sized congregations, churches were combined to create adequate revenue to renumerate the itinerate pastor.[24] The prospect of Adventist Itineracy continued as a

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[22] Joe Iovino, "The Hard Road of A Methodist Circuit Rider," UMC, https://www.umc.org/en/content/the-hard-road-of-a-methodist-circuit-rider.

[23] David J. Cook, "A Job for Superman? A Call to Clarify the Role of the Adventist Minister," *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors* (2013): 10-14.

[24] Cook, *A Job for Superman?,* 10-14.

preferred practice in the early twentieth century as the membership of this denomination rapidly outgrew the rate of growth among the denominational pastoral rank. With the growth in the number of churches outpacing the growth of ministers being trained and assigned to congregations, ministers were given multiple churches to oversee.

Inherent with this fast-paced growth were many challenges. In the book *Light Bearers,* denominational historians Richard Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf detail the typical hardship of pastoral itineracy. "The territory from Maine to Minnesota was just too large for a limited corps of available preachers."[25] Seventh-day Adventist pastoral itineracy became increasingly difficult with no formalized financial renumerating system for denominational pastors. As a result, Schwarz and Greenleaf contain that many churches "went for months without hearing a sermon from a minister of their persuasions."[26]

There were additional hardships on the Seventh-day Adventist itinerate pastor as well. Early pioneer ministers in the northern contiguous states were bi-vocational, and because of farming responsibilities during the warm seasons, they would only visit congregations that were at a horse and buggy distance away, and during the winter months, they would visit their remaining congregations because of the financial strain on the pastor.[27]

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[25] Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers* (Silver Springs, MD: Pacific Press, 1995), 84.

[26] Schwarz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers*, 84.

[27] Schwarz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers*, 84.

Adventist Church growth historian Russell Burrill explains that it took fifty years of church growth to allow the potential practice of settled pastors.[28] John Fowler, in his book *Adventist Pastoral Ministry*, asserts, "Adventist leaders of the early twentieth century, however, continued to embrace the concept of pastors as itinerant evangelists, calling such a ministry model 'The Lord's plan' for the Adventist Church."[29]

As John Wesley and the early pioneers of the Methodist Church viewed itineracy as an evangelistic model, the Seventh-day Adventist Church also adopted this practice as a tool for evangelism and reaching the outermost frontiers. However, as church pastors have become more settled in their assignments in the traditional sense of pastoral ministry, the Seventh-day Adventists' practice of 'The Lord's Plan' of pastoral itineracy in the SDA church is causing confusion.

There is a friction of authority stemming from the traditional pastoral dominance of settled pastoring versus the empowerment of the congregation in the context of pastoral itineracy. David Cook, in his article "A Job for Superman? A Call to Clarify the Role of Adventist Ministers," in the *Seventh-Day Adventist Journal*, *Ministry*, calls this friction of authority an "inevitable dissonance." The Lord's plan, according to church pioneers for the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, was for the pastoral role to be emphatically evangelistic and for the congregation to grow organically. However, eventual church growth is causing an emphasis on a more administrative and pastoral minister in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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[28] Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to The Life and Mission of The Local Church*, 174-177.

[29] John Fowler, *Adventist Pastoral Ministry*, 11.

The recent dueling Seventh-day Adventist school of thought on the subject matter can be traced back to two Adventist historians, Russell Burrill and John Fowler. Russell Burrill argues for an Adventist Pastoral model that is "evangelistic." He is drawn to an early Seventh-day Adventist model that aligns with the New Testament's model of "evangelistic clergy and not a care-giver clergy."[30]

The other school of thought championed by John Fowler advocates "reestablishing the historic role of the pastor as the guardian of the church, as its spiritual and moral leader."[31] This argument contrasts with Burrill's "caregiver" characterization of settled pastors.

The historical practice of pastoral itineracy in the Seventh-day Adventist church has morphed into an organized system for pastoral assignments. Pastors are hired and assigned to a church district, and they serve in the capacity of both caregiver and evangelist for a season of time before being assigned in another pastoral district, thus making them itinerate in practice.

Survey of Slave Preachers and Historical Practice of Itineracy

Another additional contemporary model of itineracy can also be traced to the nineteenth-century "slave preacher." In the creation of the United States of America during the mid-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was an American and European emphasis on the triangular slave trade. In this context, there was also an emphasis on the obedience of slaves and the slaves' masters need to keep their "properties" in compliance.

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[30] Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to The Life and Mission of The Local Church*, 208.

[31] Fowler, *Adventist Pastoral Ministry*, 62.

Although it was illegal for the Negro to read, plantation owners would find exceptions for the occasional slave that showed great ability to retain and repeat accepted church orthodoxy to this era and to teach these doctrines to their fellow slaves.

These Negro preachers, bound by slavery to their masters, would travel to different plantations as itinerate preachers teaching and preaching the gospel of obedience and subservience. This method of keeping slaves in order became problematic with the rise of literacy among the slaves and the dawn of new preachers who would covertly preach a different doctrine of liberation. Preachers like Sojourner Truth and Nat Turner energized their listeners to seek freedom and, in Turner's case, even rebel. These preached themes were the antitheses of the reasons for the plantation preacher, and as pastoral itineracy grew, so did their new Liberation Gospel spread and proliferate among the plantations on their circuits.

In Larry Rivers' biography of *Father James Page*, Rivers contends that during the mid-nineteenth century, Father James Page was the most recognizable slave itinerate preacher, quoting Page as saying, "Many people knew me as I traveled to so many places, they knew me sometimes more than I knew them."[32]

Page's slave audience's geographical location prohibited the likeliness of escape or rebellion. Middle Florida was an obstacle and cemented the likeliness that these slave congregations, to which Father James preached, would likely live their entire lives with the knowledge that escaping to the North or Underground Railroad would be impossible.[33] Much like the Methodist and Seventh-Day Adventist pioneers that preceded

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[32] Larry Rivers, *Father James Page: An Enslaved Preacher's Climb to Freedom* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2021), 117.

[33] Rivers, *Father James Page*, 116.

him, itineracy became a mandate, much like the biblical examples of the apostles. It was a mandatory calling from God that obligated Father James Page to circuit preach to the different slave plantations of the South to promote the hope of liberation to his fellow slaves.[34]

Inherent in Pastoral Itineracy are hardships that limited the life expectancy, and similarly these ministers experienced likewise. However, similar to these slaves, itinerate preachers faced the differing realities of the "antebellum south." Father James Page recounts, "They would stop me and ask me what I was doing; some acted real mean to me at first. I said that Col. Parkhill gave me permission to preach, and sometimes that did not seem good enough for them. I sometimes got guns and rifles being pointed at me. But after a while, when they saw me, they would just wave me on."[35]

Characteristics of the context of the preaching circuits are recounted through the interviews with bondsmen and bondservants. "Jack Sheppard recorded, 'He started preaching to those who would listen to him within weeks of his arrival in Florida. He preached in the woods when he first got to Florida, and many who came to hear him would sit on log seats."[36] Commenting on the setting of the open-air services, historian Albert Raboteau adds, "In the seclusion of the brush arbors (hush harbors) the slaves made Christianity truly their own."[37] Former bondservant Amanda McCray, in an

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[34] Rivers, *Father James Page*, 117.

[35] Rivers, *Father James Page*, 118.

[36] Rivers, *Father James Page*, 82.

[37] Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1978), 212.

interview recounted, “There were prayer grounds where the grass never had a chance to grow for the troubled knees that kept it crushed down.”[38]

Father James Page was no stranger to itinerate preaching; however, unlike the Methodist and Seventh-day Adventist itinerate preachers, Page and his fellow slaves’ colleagues operated in secrecy and often in seclusion.

Perhaps one of the most recognizable itinerate preachers during slavery was Harriet Tubman, to whom the Underground Railroad is attributed. Her itineracy as a woman is anecdotal of women preachers who felt compelled to preach but were not given opportunities. These women preachers embarked on preaching in various locations, at times leaving their families behind for the sake of the gospel.

Jarena Lee was such a case, “Lee began travelling ‘up and down the world to promulgate the gospel of Christ. She preached in various towns in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and New York. She left her children in the care of her family members and friends. She visited and prayed for the sick in their homes, and preached in private homes, churches, and bush clearings.”[39]

Slave Preachers enjoyed the liberty of itineracy as it gave them opportunities not to be confined to their plantations. Their calling was to bring hope to slaves who did not sense worth and were without hope. Some of these Slave Preachers were proficient in teaching about the eternal liberation that awaited those who believed in Christ. Yet, other Slave Preachers were efficient in preaching a Gospel that empowered enslaved African

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[38] Russell P. Skelchy and Jeremy E. Taylor, *Sonic Histories of Occupation: Experiencing Sound and Empire in a Global Context* (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2022), 62.

[39] Chanta M. Haywood, *Prophesying Daughters: Black Women Preachers the Word 1823-1913* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 4.

Americans to search for their freedom while on earth. Itinerates such as Nat Turner ever revolutionized and emboldened slaves to rebel against the tyrannical practice that was slavery. In an age of limited communication, the ability to travel from plantation to plantation brought these persons notoriety to people who could not travel far to hear them speak. Just like James Page was known wherever he went, names like Fredrick Douglas, Harriet Tubman, and Nat Turner were well known to the slaves whose entire lifetime was spent on that one plantation.[40]

Summary

In summary, his project seeks to study the historical practices of itineracy in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, beginning with the Church of England and culminating with the African American Slave itinerant preacher. Each of the aforementioned surveyed practices of itineracy has a noticeable theme of "Godly conviction." There is a palpable belief among itinerant ministers buoyed by biblical inference that seems to indicate itineracy amongst the apostles as prescriptive in ministry for the evangelistic model in promulgating the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Historically, there was great opposition to legitimizing itinerant ministry as orthodoxy and acceptable ecclesiastical ministry. Initially viewed as less sophisticated and only worthy of economically challenged demographics, such as the communities in Kingswood, England, itinerant clergy were embraced by those who were systematically denied access to the pulpits of the Church of England. Itinerant clergy, in the sense of

[40] Rivers, *Father James Page*, 117.

having no tenured pastoral designation, was not championed by the Church of England and was vilified.

However, John Wesley concluded that his success in itinerate preaching was, therefore, empirical proof of God's sanction and approval as a means for the dissemination of the Gospel of Christ to all who would listen. The "World" was his church. His parishioners became anyone whom he met as he traveled throughout the countryside of England. John Wesley concluded that he did not need a church edifice nor a sanctuary to be effective in preaching the essence of God's grace. All he needed was a waiting congregation, a collection of people who span the socioeconomic spectrum, parishioners who otherwise would not be welcomed in the Church of England.

In conclusion, as people moved west looking for economic gain and freedom, communities began to form, and so did the need for spiritual guidance. The pastor played a major role in these frontier communities. These itinerate pastors ministered to people who pushed westward looking for riches that often came at the detriment of their physical and spiritual health. Itinerate pastors were given church districts along a geographical circuit, often traveled by horse and buggy. Great focus was exhausted on a race to the west, not for gold but for God. This was the mission of the pioneer American itinerate pastor sent to the frontier.

The current Seventh-day Adventist Church denomination operates from this great tradition. It " sends" and "appoints" pastors to local congregations and "transfers" ministers from one church to the next. In recent years, considerable conversation has surrounded the viability of the itinerant pastor within the denomination as church growth

and health became the focal points of pastoral ministry. Does such an archaic practice still have relevance?

There are many factors to consider, including the pastoral family's financial stability. Pastoral itineracy is becoming a costly proposition. Unlike our Methodist counterpart, there are no pastoral parsonages, and ministers are forced to purchase and sell as they are appointed to diverse local congregations. The growing pertinent concern within the Seventh-day Adventist clergy is not the practice of itineracy but the length and tenure of itinerant pastors in their appointed church districts.

I believe that before answering the calls for denominational pastoral practice reform, we must carefully study the historical, biblical, and theological foundations. Additionally, we must review contemporary best practices in church growth, health, and evangelism to determine how to adjust our pastoral tenure properly in the itinerate system.

A well-defined system will benefit both the pastoral family and the local congregation. In this vein, I have selected this field of study as a project. My project is to unearth the "why" of pastoral itineracy as an informed practice for congregations within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in this century.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The theological foundation chapter for this project is the underlying message found in the Apostle Paul's epistles and, more specifically, his first canonized correspondence with the Church in Corinth. In 1 Corinthians 3:3, Paul is speaking to a church that has experienced changes in its leadership. Internal factions were fossilized in relationship to the leaders of their preference. Paul rebuts this notion in verse four, "When one of you says, 'I am a follower of Paul,' and another says, 'I follow Apollos,' aren't you acting just like people of the world?"

This assertion by the apostle seeks to admonish Christians in Corinth to live beyond the ordinary of this world while he advocates for a healthy understanding of the parity of leadership styles and gifts. Paul restates his thoughts on the matter by clearly articulating in verse six, "I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow." For Paul, the leaders are less consequential; his focus is centered on the cooperative assignment from God. The key thematic term is "Holistic Ecclesiastical Health," translated into modern terms "Church Well Being." Paul defines church well-being as the heterogenous synergistic collaborative effort in the execution of mission by the leaders who are appointed for and during specific seasons of the church's arch-line and history.

Herein lies the difficulty with the current pastoral itinerant model in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. There is more emphasis on personnel change driven by rotational preferences and tenure lengths derived from the local denominational leadership's prerogatives than on deciphering seasonal and congregational needs.

Additionally, pastoral leaders must be given the opportunity to fulfill their missional mandates from God fully. Paul's argument remains that God's ability to grow and expand the local congregation is through collaborative efforts. The parity and diversity of pastoral gifts of each minister are needed to be effective in meeting different seasonal needs. Some will plant, some will water, and God will give the increase.

The theological framework extrapolated from the exegetical survey of the biblical foundation text is the symbiotic health exhibited through the synergy of diversity in pastoral leadership. This synergy must be organic as orchestrated by God, who is the giver of all gifts. Leaders come and go; their missional assignments differ, their ministerial emphases differ, and their gifts and skill sets are different; however, God utilizes these differences in each leader in a complimenting fashion. A healthy church does not prefer one season over the other but utilizes each season to continue to build upon the original foundation of Christ Jesus. A healthy church is a good church, one that takes accountability for each season and each foundational layer of the church.

Furthermore, the theme of holistic ecclesiastical health or church well-being can be a threat to the current model of pastoral itineracy in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. This threat to church well-being is caused when pastoral appointments fail to fully navigate the arch-line of their seasons and personnel changes are made at the prerogative of denominational leadership, creating a short-circuit, which then threatens

the health and continuing growth of not only that church but the entire system of (sisterhood) churches within the denominational local conference context, as well as negatively impact the pastors themselves.

Effective pastoral ministry is inclusive of the self-fulfilling emotional attachment to the pastoral mandate that is allowed to run its proper course. The pastor who is called to water will experience well-being when they have fulfilled the calling of watering during the watering season, and a pastor who is called to plant will experience well-being when they fulfill their calling of planting. Their well-being is contingent upon mission completion.

To be fair to the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, there are times when allowing pastoral leaders to remain for the duration of their seasonal mission is not feasible. There are times when conflicts between pastor and congregation arise, or there are times when pastoral malpractice necessitates change. Even to this point, an argument can be made that denominational leadership should follow the spiritual motif of seasons, missions, and God-led wisdom for the proper initial congregational appointments that such a pre-emptive measure can mitigate potential pastoral malpractice and lessen the chance of "pastor vs. congregation" conflicts and incompatibility.

The hypothesis argues for an intentional tolerance for fulfilled mission and the completion of seasons, as identified by the congregation, the pastor, the denominational leaders, and God in the decision-making process for pastoral appointments. Seasons are not to be measured chronologically but missionally, thus giving the opportunity for congregations to effectively build upon previous foundations. I have coined the term, the "Heterogenous Synergistic Collaborative Effort" to which Paul calls the Corinthians and

all Christian churches to espouse as the ideal for church well-being is the focus of the mission by all who labor in their God-given ministerial gifts.

Anything short of this is problematic for the church. As a policy, the current pastoral itinerate model in the Seventh-day Adventist Church leaves little to no recourse if Paul's ideal pastoral itinerate model of heterogenous synergistic collaborative effort is not the preferred mode of operation for the denomination. The cost of operating this way leaves the collective congregation deprived of ecclesiastic health and church well-being. Pastoral families are often displaced for leadership preferences, congregations experience pastoral leadership in staccato fashion, and the observable result is congregations that are not experiencing God's growth power potential.

The Apostle Paul maintains this polemic of ecclesiastical well-being in the fourth chapter of his epistle to the Church of Ephesus. Paul posits that Christ is the giver of these spiritual gifts. Paul lists five special gifts ingrained in the church: apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd (the work of the pastor), and teacher, as necessary to build up the church and the body of Christ. The apostle makes the argument that Christ utilizes these different gifts in cooperation to achieve optimal church health. Paul contends, "He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love" (Eph. 4:16).

It is evident from the writings of Paul that his understanding of growth is not numerical, the apostle forwards the notion of spiritual health, wellness, and well-being in the contextual term of "maturity" or the "carnal" versus "spiritual" motif. For Paul,

growth is measured in spiritual wellness and maturity.[1] This maturation process is the crux of this project; it is a theme of collaboration and cooperation, human good, and the grace of God.[2] God utilizes imperfect man to achieve a divine objective. The problem in the process is when men refuse to allow God to orchestrate. Potential reasons for an unwillingness to cooperate are personal biases, agendas, and denominational or church politics.

The theological foundation of church health and well-being for a reimagined pastoral itinerant model in the Seventh-day Adventist Church will produce a fresh understanding of a transcending perspective for a new identity of the flourishing and growing church. This theological discourse includes a practical discovery of God's intention for the frustrated itinerant clergy.

Theological Framework

There are several theological schools of thoughts that debate on the themes of spiritual health and wholeness. Black Theology as practiced by the community of faith as described by James Cone has this specific role, "There can be no Christian theology that is not identified unreservedly with those who are humiliated and abused. In fact, theology ceases to be a theology of the gospel when it fails to arise out of the community of the oppressed."[3] Cone contends that because black theology is "survival theology" it must

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[1] James W. Thompson, *Pastoral Ministry According to Paul: A Biblical Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 78, ProQuest Ebook Central.

[2] Yong Won Song, Susan Hardman Moore, David Fergusson, and University of Edinburgh, "Common Good in the Theology of John Calvin" (diss., University of Edinburgh, 2012).

[3] James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2020), 1.

address the "wounds of the oppressed."[4] This is a call for the disruption of any oppressive system that infringes on the well-being and freedom of individuals. Black Theology surveys contend for a God that is active in leading the marginalized to optimal spiritual wellness and ultimately to a state of flourishing.

A second theological framework that lends value to this project is Synergism. Synergism is inextricably connected to Black Theology. It is a term contrived out of the doctrine of grace; it sits between Calvinism and Arminianism. The framework of synergism contemplates the acting elements in salvation. It is defined as "the belief that salvation is a work between God and a human."[5] The extrapolated principle relevant to this research project is the reality of a synergistic collaborative effort between God and man. Although collaborative, no amount of work from man's perspective equates to the totality of God's work in the process or act of salvation. Synergism speaks of a work of faith in response to God's salvific work.

In the role of pastoral ministry, God enlists man to be God's hands, feet, and mouthpiece. Jesus, speaking to his disciples in Matthew 9:37 and 38, emphatically identifies the workers of the vineyard, the Lord of the harvest, and the one responsible for sending them out, "He said to his disciples, 'The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."

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[4] Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation,* 18.

[5] Daniel Kirkpatrick, *Monergism or Synergism Is Salvation Cooperative or the Work of God Alone?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2018), ix.

Christopher J. H. Wright, in his work *The Mission for God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission,* quotes John Scott: "God has a purpose and goal for his whole creation, and as part of that divine mission, God has called into existence a people to participate with God in the accomplishment of that mission."[6] This calling into participation with a divine God is the outcome of the purpose of creation. God intended for people to function in their created purpose.

The creation biblical narrative of Genesis chapter one displays the actions of God as well as the sentiments of God. A survey of the biblical text exposes a series of "God said/created" and "God saw it was good." The divine Creator assessed His creation to be good and, in a contemplative manner, declared all God's creation to be "very good." (Gen. 1:31). Each creative action bearing self-sustained purpose and in concert with function is declared to be good. Ellen T. Charry contends that God "created for his own enjoyment."[7] Functionally, God's enjoyment in creation occurs when the created masterpiece flourishes in the intended purpose. God's declaration sets the narrative landscape for humanity's possible flourishing within the scope of humanity's ability to operate for the intended purpose.

The actualization of purposes and mission provide direction while journeying with God. The fulfillment of purpose fosters opportunities for humanity to experience well-being. In delineating His mission, Jesus's declarative assertion in John 10:10 is that He has come to give "abundant life." Christ is emphatically dogmatic about producing a

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[6] Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission for God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 25.

[7] E. T. Charry, "God and the Art of Happiness," *Theology Today* 68, no. 3 (2011): 238-252, https://doi-org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0040573611416701.

milieu for human-abundant living. It has been said that there is a necessity for Christians to "receive, accept, use and share the gift of God in order to gain full benefits of being a Christians."[8]

This gift of abundance in Christianity is often viewed through the hermeneutical lenses of eschatology and soteriology. Much of the Christian tradition of happiness is based in the Augustinian theology of happiness that eventually is to be experienced beyond the veil of the temporal into the ceaseless ages of eternity.

A third framework is a cross-pollination between psychology and theology. Liz Gulliford focuses on the positive psychology of well-being with an emphasis on hope and gratitude. Gulliford asserts that gratitude is grounded in believing in the goodness of the giver, rather than the manifest goodness of gifts received."[9] This emphasis on gratitude elevates the focus and transcends the context and acknowledges the God who is the giver of "every perfect thing given and every perfect gift" (Jas. 1:7).

The intentional exercise of gratitude promotes well-being. In his epistle to the church of Ephesus, the Apostle Paul reminds his audience to "always give thanks" to God the Father for all things (Eph. 5:20). This assertion prioritizes not just the good and perfect gifts but also an Omniscient God who allows even adversity to produce a positive end when viewed through the lens of gratitude.

A study found that "58%" of men who experienced a heart attack acknowledge lessons learned and lifestyle changes that affected positive health amelioration several

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[8] Franklin D. R. Jackson, *Becoming a Joy Fulfilled Christian in the Twenty-First Centuty and Beyond: The Priveleges, Benefits, and Responsibilities of a Joy-Fulfilled Christian* (Bloomington, IL: West Bow, 2019), 2.

[9] Liz Guillford, "Happiness and Well-Being in Positive Psychology: An Evaluation and Examination with a Focus on the Virtues of Gratitude and Hope," In *Religious and Non-Religious Perspectives on Happiness and Wellbeing* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2022), 17-34.

weeks later. The traumatic experience yielded to positive change for the individuals who viewed this negative experience as a catalyst for positive change."[10] Concerning the results of this study, Gulliford says, "Being able to discern good things that have arisen through manifestly negative events shows people do not limit seeing value in their lives to positive experiences, though benefit finding and benefit reminding are perhaps more closely allied to appreciation than they are to gratitude."[11]

A proper survey of gratitude and appreciation in theological terms transcends the focus on the blessings of the gift and, in the absence thereof, the gratefulness for the progenitor of the gift. It is a radical view of the benefit of hardships that allows people to flourish through appreciation and gratitude. It is difficult because it places us on the journey toward well-being. In a recorded sermon, Paul Tillich asserted that we do not solely give thanks for the things that bring us pleasure and happiness but also for "disappointment, pain, and suffering." His assertion is that these hardships allowed us to be aligned with our purpose and to "fulfill that for which we were born."[12]

This research project will examine and survey the values of the theological components of "Ecclesiastical Well-Being" as viewed as a possible Theological Foundation. It will be seen through the lenses of both Black Theology and Synergism as a possible means of examining the stated context problem with the Seventh-day Adventist Model of Pastoral Itineracy.

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[10] G. Affleck, H. Tennen, S. Croog, and S. Levine, "Causal Attribution, Perceived Benefits and Morbidity Following a Heart Attack: An Eight-Year Study," *The Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* (1987), 55, 29-35.

[11] Gulliford, *Happiness and Well-Being in Positive Psychology*, 17-34.

[12] Paul Tillich, "The Endless Now," In *In Everything Give Thanks* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 184.

A Theology of Church Well-Being based on Pauline Epistles

The pastoral itinerate model, as practiced in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, can create systems that prove to be disruptive for denominational ministers, pastoral families, and the organization. A similar hardship is often also experienced within the church community and is dependent on denominational-leadership-collaboration for effective spiritual maturation and for church growth. A broad biblical New Testament teaching couched in 3 John establishes a possible foundation for a theology of well-being, "Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers" (John 3:2).

John, the "Elder" and author of this one-chapter epistle, advocates for a congregation that prospers spiritually, physically, and emotionally flourishing. The Johannine author's highest ideal is congregational well-being in the corporate and individual realm. This theme of theological well-being is also amply found within the Pauline corpus.

This theme of theological well-being is also amply found within the Pauline corpus. Ecclesiastical well-being as a theme frequently reoccurs in Paul's epistolary writing. He writes to the church in Rome in the first chapter "I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to visit you, but I was prevented until now. I want to work among you and see spiritual fruit, just as I have seen among other Gentiles" (Rom. 1:13).

The Apostle Paul is advancing the notion that "spiritual fruit" is concrete evidence for effective healthy ministry. It appears that for Paul, "spiritual fruit" is an indicator of ecclesiastical well-being. Church wellness materially produces "spiritual fruits" as proof

of church well-being; his arguments forward indicate that his previous churches produced "spiritual fruits" because of his personal ministry. The objective argument to the readers in Rome is the evidence of "spiritual fruits" as an indicator of spiritual well-being in the church community. Paul displays a pattern of success even though disruptive forces are present and keeping him from physically visiting the church in Rome. Paul effectively utilizes the gift of his authorship to pen epistles to deal with his inability to be present in churches where he has ministered and cities where he hopes to minister. The subject of the Pauline letters aims at the heart of church wellness and the flourishing of congregations, inclusive of congregants, and congregational leaders.

The apostle's theological motif of ecclesiastical well-being is again put on display in the letter to the church to Philippi. Paul contends that disruptive forces contextual to their congregation seek to harm him through the promulgation of the gospel. Paul's response is telling of a church community that is maturing on their journey to well-being, "But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice" (Phil. 1:18).

Paul understands the impact of disruptions in pastoral itineracy. In this Philippian case study, Paul's successor is preaching out of jealousy supposing that the messages preached would increase his discomfort. Similar to the Church in Corinth, there appears to be competitive animus in those vying for ministerial legitimacy among the spiritual leaders in the Philippian Church. Ecclesiastical well-being is clearly demonstrated in the spiritual maturity of the Apostle Paul, who operates within his seasonal appointment and has the conviction in God's synergistic work model. God will grow the church as Christ

is preached, despite motivation, nefarious spitefulness, or intentions. This view can only be held by a minister operating in a well-being state.

God's increase in the growth potential of the church, in spite of personnel shifts in itinerate local leaders, is the foundation for a theology of church well-being. Paul is advocating that the promulgating of Christ as an outcome is most significant and not the personalities or persons who are promulgating the gospel. "…Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice" (Phil. 1:18).

Throughout his ministry, there were two main threats to ecclesiastical well-being within his various church communities: internal and external threats. In his major defense of his calling, the Apostle Paul, in the letter to the Church in Galatia, asserted his apostolic authority in the church to defend against the rise of threats to his apostleship.

> For I would have you know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel which was preached by me is not of human invention. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former way of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. But when He who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days. But I did not see another one of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which are in Christ; but they only kept hearing, "The man who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." And they were glorifying God because of me (Gal. 1:11-17).

The Apostle Paul's practice of establishing his apostolic authority was modus operandi when faced with internal threats to congregational well-being: "be imitators of me, as I follow Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1) was Paul's imperative to his readers. The establishment of his apostolic identity was his imitation of Christ. His ministerial appointment was based on God's prerogative, and his mission was to model Jesus Christ in an effort for the church to grow and experience well-being.

For Paul, there appears to be a linkage between the church's well-being and his personal well-being. He admonishes them to be imitators of him, presumably because he is effectively an imitator of Christ. It is, therefore, interesting that Paul is so confident in his state of well-being that he encourages his congregants to look to him as a model of wellness. His confidence is clear evidence that Paul believes that his pastoral well-being, derived from his wholeness in Christ, is directly linked to the congregational well-being where he ministers.

Moreover, Paul, in his second letter to the Church of Corinth, enumerates aspects of his perceived weakness in forming an argument for his expressed authority, "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). It is generally understood to mean that God's work is perfect even while at our lowest human experience.

In speaking on this passage, Murray Harris comments that Jesus' grace and strength "denote divine gifts of enablement, the power for Paul to fulfill his apostolic calling of service and suffering."[13] Paul, through Christ, is finding the needed strength to flourish. Paul's documented questioned authority resulting from the absence of his

[13] Murray J. Harris, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Company, 2005), 863.

physical presence or the rise in leadership opposition appears to be the foundation of his argument that even in a weakened state, God's power is perfectly put on display. This drives Paul's belief that it is God who grants the increase. The increase is not personnel-based; rather, it is God-centered.

In his epistles, Paul advocates a complementary theology that finds balance while on the journey toward well-being. Although a careful survey of the Pauline corpus provides ample evidence of Paul asserting his apostolic calling, careful observation will confirm that Paul's theological recognition of God as the only supreme authority is intertwined with his apostolic influence.

The apostle presses forward a reality of his personal weaknesses, finding balance and homeostasis in God's sufficient strength. Theologically, well-being is the presence of balance in purpose and connection with God as the source that leads to a flourishing experience. This means that church well-being is the crossroads between the faithful execution of missional seasons and God's approval through the provision of church growth in various church areas.

Internal and External Threats to a Theology of Church Well-Being

Internally, threats to the well-being of the church can be rooted primarily in the attacks on the well-being of congregational leadership, principally the pastoral staff and family. Causally, the pastor's well-being can affect the congregation's general well-being. The pastor's personal well-being is the spiritual foundation that allows that church to flourish. Pastors must effectively be rooted in a spiritually formed relationship with God

that brings balance and creates the impetus to ameliorate the personal and spiritual areas of deficiencies while maintaining purpose and remaining on mission.

Another internal threat is clergy burnout. As expressed and defined in the book *Flourishing In Ministry: How to Cultivate Clergy Well-Being,* the threat of "burnout" will cause a decline in the pastoral performance of the clergy.[14] The mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health of the pastor is inextricably linked to the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health of the congregation as a result for pastor and church alignment.

To this point, Matt Bloom asserts as significant work stress and financial burdens rise because of ministry, so will "pastoral effectiveness," begin to go down.[15] There is a seesaw effect that links pastoral well-being to effective pastoral ministry, which ultimately leads to church well-being.

A second threat to church well-being is external, and unlike internal threats, external threats are less controllable. In the Seventh-day Adventist denomination's organizational structure, the local church functions at the behest of the governing leadership body, identified as the conference. Conferences are structured with an executive board and conference officials. The conference President, Executive Secretary, and Chief Financial Officer are the administrative officers who drive the conference's agenda for the execution of administration and mission.

This level of Seventh-day Adventist administration is responsible for policies, practices, and procedures. Decisions regarding pastoral personnel, cooperative ministerial

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[14] Matt Bloom, *Flourishing In Ministry: How to Cultivate Clergy Well-Being* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019), 18.

[15] Bloom, *Flourishing In Ministry: How to Cultivate Clergy Well-Being*, 11.

direction, and identified church goals and objectives for the local congregations are derived at this administrative level. Additionally, this organizational reality is apt to create a milieu for external conflict and pressure, more so in times of church and conference disagreement and misalignment or even simply in the general conference administrative process.

Seventh-day Adventist denominational pastors face external pressures from the conference leadership administrative level. Seventh-day Adventist clergy are tasked with executing the mission of the local church context and, more broadly, the articulated mission and vision of the local denominational conference. Souls and goals, as colloquially expressed, can become a source of ministry-related stress for the Adventist pastor. Failure to excel in these areas can be viewed as pastoral failure and be just cause for administrative intervention that ranges from mere conversation with leadership to potential reassignment in another church and geographical context.

The year 2019 brought a once-in-a-generation external threat to church well-being with the arrival of the pandemic of coronavirus, Covid-19. Officially declared by the World Health Organization a pandemic on March 11, 2020, after surpassing 118,000 cases in 114 countries and an attributed 4,291 death loss, COVID-19 has affected every aspect of life.[16]

The COVID-19 outbreak officially became a "global pandemic" in March 2020, creating unprecedented sustainability challenges for organizations. COVID-19 has affected the operations and sustainability of civic and religious institutions. Globally, leaders of diverse industries were demanded to rethink the norm and create a new normal.

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[16] Kathy Katella, "Our Pandemic Year—A COVID-19 Timeline," Yale Medicine, https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/covid-timeline.

According to the article “Essential Work in the U.S. During COVID-19: Navigating Vulnerability-Sustainability Tensions,” it stated that “One of the most significant labels during the pandemic was essential worker.”[17] This was an identifying label to differentiate between workers who needed to be present in the workplace versus workers who were given a license to work remotely. The clergy continued to be essential in the pandemic. Pastors were tasked with continued ministry for families and congregants who were affected by COVID-19.

Additionally, the church was affected and forced to reimagine and restructure to survive, along with institutions struggling with well-being. Left with skeletal staff and volunteers, much of the church's survival and well-being during the pandemic became an additional task for the clergy to fulfill. There was now a new reality and new threat to well-being: the expectation of the unknown.

The external threat of COVID-19 challenged the well-being of pastors and their families, which in turn led to anticipated causal effects on congregations which unsurprisingly produced outcomes opposite of well-being. There is no doubt that studies on the effects of COVID-19 on the well-being of the church will be the subject of research projects by church principal investors for years to come. A reasonable hypothesis can be made that pastoral leaders who were affected by the effects of coronavirus, both physically and emotionally, were linked to the possible decline of congregational well-being for churches from the year 2020 going forward.

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[17] Astrid M. Villamil and Suzy D’Enbeau, "Essential Work in the U.S. During COVID-19: Navigating Vulnerability–Sustainability Tensions" *Sustainability* 13, no. 19 (2021): 10665, https://doi.org/10.3390/su131910665.

Conclusion

Well-being is essential to the Christian experience. This journey to a state of flourish is an expectation from a Creator who deemed creation to be good. Inclusive in God's creative “logos” is the human experience's divine intention. However, in the realm of Christian Theology, many view happiness as an ideal to be reached in the afterlife. Charry concludes that “Happiness arrives in another life, where the saints dwell forever with God, that is, with perfect knowledge of God in the blessed vision.”[18]

Interestingly, the Theology of Well-Being presupposes that happiness is not merely eschatological but transcendental. Humanity's mission is to revisit the Creator’s initial declarative goal of being “very good.” The unveiling of God's being will no doubt reveal the Divine, who is actively meeting humanity's necessities and creating a divine environment where wellness and happiness can flourish.

[18] Ellen T. Charry, "God and the Art of Happiness," *Theology Today* 68, no. 3 (2011): 238–252.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

The study of wholeness for congregational pastors who minister in the context of pastoral itineracy is vital to the spiritual health of the congregation. If congregational pastors remain in pastoral assignments for longer pastoral tenures within the pastoral itinerate system, then optimal pastoral well-being is possible.

The underlining thematic framework of pastoral well-being is the converging themes of my spiritual autobiography and contextual analysis. The biblical example of pastoral synergy described in 1 Corinthians chapter three demonstrates a potential roadmap for pastoral itineracy and its usefulness in an ideal, defined structure, with God ultimately granting the increase. Unlike the less defined reasons for pastoral appointments in modern practice, the Apostle Paul submits a God-ordained synergistic process not driven by pastoral charisma, nepotism, or any subjective, intrinsic value-driven reasons from institutional leadership.

The reality of pastoral brokenness is evident among ministers who are subjected to a system that benefits the institution but creates hardships for pastors and their emotional fitness, family, finances, and future. Pastoral ministry seeks to serve the needs of congregants and surrounding communities by rendering aid that produces well-being. Considering the pastor's role in promoting the well-being of others, an appropriate

question can be posed concerning how the pastor achieves well-being and who will aid them in this pursuit.

The system of itineracy emerges in different spheres of vocational professions. The United States military is closely associated with the pastoral practice of itineracy. It is to the benefit of this research to investigate the military's best practices derived from the interdisciplinary science of Positive Psychology to help the pastor achieve well-being. Similar to the Seventh-day Adventist denominational itinerate model, one-third of military service members are subjected to a permanent change of station moves each year.[1] The U.S. Government Accountability Office states that the average time between permanent change station moves is two years.[2]

Several factors influence permanent change-of-station relocations: marital status, family size, relocation cost, and emotional fitness. Additionally, the military studies cited in this project will offer findings that demonstrate inherent behavioral and attitudinal perspectives centered principally around diminishing well-being caused by family disruption, i.e., loss of spousal income, frequent relocation, changes in the cost of living, new social context, educational disruption for students, and spousal underemployment.

The stated hypothesis supposes that lengths of pastoral tenure are inextricably linked to pastoral well-being within the pastoral intenerate system. Secondly, the flourishing pastoral family in this context is linked to the ministering pastor's quality of

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[1] Patricia K. Tong, *Enhancing the Family During a Permanent Change of Station: A Review of Disruptions and Policies* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2018), 1.

[2] Derek B. Stewart, "Longer Time Between Moves Related to Higher Satisfaction and Retention, Briefing Report to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate," Government Accountability Office, https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-01-841.pdf.

ministry. Pastoral well-being can be achieved through the proper alignment of the PERMA Well-being Theory.

There is an indefinable link between the success of the congregation and the well-being of the assigned pastor. The well-being of a congregation is assessed through the spiritual and tangible framework of a flourishing church recognized as "God's increase." The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians identifies the flourishing church by the noticeable increase that is granted through the agency of God. Men are interchangeable, and their ministries are complimentary, as one pastor succeeds the former pastor. However, the noticeable principle in the textual pericope is the ability of the planter to plant and the irrigationist to irrigate (1 Cor. 3:5 and 6).

Martin Seligman, a leading source in Positive Psychology, is widely responsible for the development of the PERMA Well-Being Theory. Positive Psychology is defined as "the scientific study of the factors that enable individuals and communities to flourish."[3] Seligman's PERMA Well-Being Theory suggests that there is potential for humanity to flourish. The observable data in this theory suggests that there is a measurable framework that views the possibility for individuals to flourish and, through the construct, can gauge the level of one's well-being and thus the ability to flourish, according to the principles of Positive Psychology.

It is important to note that Positive Psychology "is descriptive, not prescriptive." This means those who forward this science are not instructing certain life choices to ascend into a flourishing utopian life, but rather they are merely exposing their research

[3] Martin E. P. Seligman, "PERMATheory of Well-Being and PERMA Workshops," University of Pennsylvania, https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/learn-more/perma-theory-well-being-and-perma-workshops.

on the "factors that enable flourishing" beings, thus creating the opportunities for a possible abundant and flourishing life.[4] The importance of Positive Psychology and the PERMA Well-Being Theory as an interdisciplinary is to demonstrate how a positive being will function positively. The emphasis is on creating a culture that allows for itinerate pastors to flourish both in the familial home and in their everyday ministry.

From a sociological perspective, it is noteworthy to highlight that people are not merely interested in living without suffering; they are intrinsically gravitated toward living a life that moves beyond suffering into flourishing. The PERMA Well-Being Theory is comprised of five components: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments.[5] Seligman and the PERMA Well-Being Theory will be further examined.

Positive Psychology has become a science. The military utilizes this theory as one of the foundations to create initiatives, policies, and programs aimed at the well-being of military personnel.[6] Several resources provide evidence of long-term hardships for military families regarding their obligations to the military. These studies outline family disruptions, spousal underemployment, and educational challenges among the children of active military service members. Prominently common in the studies is the financial impact on military families because of the Permanent Change Station.

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[4] Martin E. P. Seligman, "PERMATheory of Well-Being and PERMA Workshops," University of Pennsylvania, https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/learn-more/perma-theory-well-being-and-perma-workshops.

[5] Martin E. P. Seligman, *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2011), 16-17.

[6] Steven Weitzman, "Strategic Spirituality: Positive Psychology, the Army, and the Ambiguities of "Spirituality Fitness,"" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 89, no. 1 (March 2021): 240–271.

As a result of the indispensable necessity of the military, many more resources and research surrounding the lives of active service members are available in comparison to itinerate clergy and their families. The results of the aforementioned studies will aid in informing this project as an interdisciplinary guide on the effects of pastoral itineracy. This research project intends to utilize both Seligman's PERMA Well-Being Theory and the research findings from the military to inform the emotional fitness and well-being of the pastor operating in an itinerate system.

A Review of Seligman's PERMA Well-Being Theory

Dr. Martin Seligman is the Director of the University of Pennsylvania's Positive Psychology Center and Zellerbach Family Professor of Psychology in the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Psychology. He is recognized as the leading authority in the fields of resilience, learned helplessness, depression, optimism, pessimism, and Positive Psychology.[7] Seligman is responsible for the PERMA Well-Being Theory. This positive psychology theory is the construct of five elements: positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment.[8]

These five elements of the PERMA Well-Being Theory each are vital in achieving optimal happiness as is categorized in the term "flourishing." Seligman's first necessary element is "Positive Emotion." This element is also known as the "pleasant life."[9] Seligman argues that this element is subjective and can only be defined through the

[7] Penn Arts and Sciences, "Martin E. P. Seligman," University of Pennsylvania, https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/people/martin-ep-seligman.

[8] Penn Arts and Sciences, "Martin E. P. Seligman," University of Pennsylvania, https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/people/martin-ep-seligman.

prism and experience of the individual. Unlike the Happiness Theory, positive emotion is not the goal but just one of the elements to be sensitive to while on a journey to well-being. Certain key questions necessary to gauge positive emotion could be, "Does the instability of itineracy make you happy?" or "What factors affect your happiness?"

The element of engagement defined is being overtaken by the moment during the engagement. Seligman offers anecdotally the example of a person who is lost in the enjoyment of their activity. It is a loss of "self-consciousness," and while the subjective state of positive emotion is in the present, Seligman posits that the "subjective state of engagement is only retrospective."[10] It is often experienced after the fact in a nostalgic fashion. In the context of the itinerate pastor executing the duties of their responsibility, does itineracy create disruptions eclipsing the opportunity for the clergy to lose self-consciousness, or are there impediments clouding their ability to be fully engaged? This question drives at the well-being of the minister who otherwise, in a thriving environment, would be flourishing.

The third element is identified as meaning. This element endeavors to measure fulfillment in terms of service "to something that is bigger than self." It is finding meaning and joy in the pursuit of intrinsic value. Three aspects measure that sense of fulfillment. First, this relentless obeisance to the ideal meaning drives personal well-being. Secondly, the pursuit becomes the obsession of the occupation for the meaning's sake. Thirdly, meaning is independently measured aside from the other four elements of

[9] Penn Arts and Sciences, "Martin E. P. Seligman," University of Pennsylvania, https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/people/martin-ep-seligman.

[10] Penn Arts and Sciences, "Martin E. P. Seligman," University of Pennsylvania, https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/people/martin-ep-seligman.

well-being (positive emotion, engagement, positive relationship, and accomplishment).[11] In the evaluation of pastoral itineracy, the pastoral call, mission and meaning is the anchor that independently fuels pastors that are otherwise disenchanted as a result of the disruption of this system. Albeit grounding, the mission can be impacted in its execution when personal hardships are being experienced simultaneously.

The fourth element of Seligman's PERMA Well-Being Theory is accomplishment, otherwise described as the achieved life. The achieved life pursues accomplishment for accomplishment's sake. It, too, is independent and bears no driving factor on positive emotions, meaning, or positive relationships. Defined granularly, this element of accomplishment suggests finding well-being in the pursuit of accomplishment.[12]

The final element of Seligman's PERMA Well-Being Theory is a positive relationship. Martin Seligman states, "We scientists have found that doing a kindness produces the single most momentary increase in well-being than in any exercise we have tested."[13] Seligman is arguing that positive relationships increase individuals' well-being. Conversely, negative relationship experiences can negatively impact well-being. The negative impact of pastoral itineracy on loved ones can foster adverse well-being, thus creating the framework for pastoral brokenness.

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[11] Penn Arts and Sciences, "Martin E. P. Seligman," University of Pennsylvania, https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/people/martin-ep-seligman.

[12] Penn Arts and Sciences, "Martin E. P. Seligman," University of Pennsylvania, https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/people/martin-ep-seligman.

[13] Penn Arts and Sciences, "Martin E. P. Seligman," University of Pennsylvania, https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/people/martin-ep-seligman.

A cursory perusal of Seligman's PERMA Well-Being Theory illustrates a construct of five elements derived from Positive Psychology. When emphasized positively, these five elements of PERMA (positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment) in pastoral itineracy would aid pastors, pastoral families, and church ministries to experience optimal well-being and achieve a state of flourishing.

These five elements should serve as the basic tenets of ministry. Ministry, in its purest form, promotes positive emotions. Pastoral ministry requires full engagement in the discharge of services. Additionally, ministering to a transcendent God, who is the progenitor of the ministerial call, yields great accomplishments and meaning. The selfless ministerial call from God is practiced in interpersonal relationships, producing a sense of meaning for pastoral service.

It is evident that the five elements of PERMA necessary for well-being are inherently present in the vocation of pastoral ministry. However, the problem statement for this research project highlights "pastoral brokenness" because of an itinerate model practiced, which does not appear to assign importance to the theory of pastoral well-being.

It is unclear whether the Seventh-day Adventist denominational itinerate model for pastoral ministry values Seligman's PERMA Well-Being theory, considering the ample documented data on pastoral disruptions and low pastoral morale. Additionally, can institutional policies that have not gone through recent theological criticism and practical critique be an indictment on organizations that have adopted and are fully endorsing such policies and procedures? For the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination and for much of early Protestantism in early America, itinerate ministry

was responsible for much of the advances in church planting and the promulgation of the gospel. An equally beneficial question should be, is Pastoral Itineracy in recent times creating more gospel-spreading opportunities? Is the administrative cost of reassigning or transferring ministers proportionate with the gains in mission execution?

I posit that a well-balanced pastor with a well-balanced personal life will yield to a well-balanced church. It has been noted that the requisite elements for well-being are present, and the opportunity to flourish is available. Yet, pastoral well-being within pastoral itineracy, as modeled in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is considerably low. There perhaps are various reasons. However, this research project will focus on the causal link between pastoral itineracy and well-being. There is a need to identify why pastoral well-being is not considerably high when the elements for flourishing are germane to the vocation and the calling to ministry.

For instance, Robert A. Emmons argues, “There is a robust connection between personal well-being and a concern with the spiritual. The "faith factor" emerges as a significant contributor to quality-of-life indicators such as life satisfaction, happiness, self-esteem, hope and optimism, and meaning in life.”[14] It is important to note that personal concerns, familial welfare, and personal and professional goals are factors in the determination of one’s personal assessment of quality of life. The disruptions experienced from the itinerate model of ministry can create spiritual apathy. This reality in the context of pastoral well-being suggests a hierarchy in a relationship for personal fulfillment over organizational and institutional contentment. The pursuit of well-being can be affected by the necessary disruptions of itineracy. However noble the mission of the institution, the

[14] Robert A. Emmons, *The Psychology of Ultimate Concerns: Motivation and Spirituality in Personality* (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 1999), 5.

vocational personnel must find the elements of well-being within their mandated tasks to be able to execute at the highest levels. The causal link between excellence in the discharge of ministry and personal well-being can be measured and is identified through the views and attitudes of ministers in relationship to their governing bodies.

Although development "positive development" has yet to find its anchor in the science of Positive Psychology, a great emphasis on the expansion of the positive elements in the PERMA theory will facilitate one's growth and actualization of well-being, or as Seligman put it, a state of "flourish."[15] For the pastor to flourish in the Seventh-day Adventist denominational model of itineracy, opportunities must be allowed for the positive development of these elements to foster a state of flourishing within the pastoral rank.

The staccato approach of itineracy creates hardships for the rudimentary growth of the pastor operating in this model, consequently fostering a possible culture of pastoral brokenness. If true, the hypothesis nevertheless remains that a broken pastor will lead to families, ministries, and denominational organizations that are not flourishing in Martin Seligman's perspective.

In the realm of Positive Psychology, there is a perspective of multiculturalism that deals with the diverse subcultures within a majority culture.[16] In the pursuit of well-being, identifying elements of flourishing across the cultural spectrum can be beneficial in appropriating these positive aspects to another sub-culture. For example, within the

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[15] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Isabella Selega Csikszentmihalyi, *A Life Worth Living: Contributions to Positive Psychology Series in Positive Psychology* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 99.

[16] Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti, Lisa M. Edwards, and Shane J. Lopez, *Positive Psychology Within a Cultural Context, Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021), 60.

culture of itineracy, the sub-culture of the Seventh-day Adventist denominational model of itineracy perhaps can positively develop some of the elements of PERMA by observing the positive developments in other sub-culture itinerate institutions, like the U. S. military.

Dr. Seligman's advances and scientific findings in the field of Positive Psychology can be found in the United States military. The military utilizes the PERMA Theory of well-being to advance mission readiness and create positive well-being reflected in the attitude of the enlisted military personnel and their families.[17]

United States Armed Forces as an Interdisciplinary Model

The United States military reports one-third of military service members are subjected to permanent change of station moves each year. Additionally, the U.S. Government Accountability Office states that the average time between permanent change station moves is two years.[18] Analogously per average, the Seventh-day Adventist Church itinerate pastor experiences a ministry context change every three years.[19] Seventh-day Adventist pastors experience personal, familial, and ministerial disruptions, which cause impediments in achieving pastoral well-being.

There appear to be striking similarities in context tenures and personnel relocation for military members and Seventh-day Adventist pastors. A review of the reported

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[17] Weitzman, "Strategic Spirituality: Positive Psychology," 240–271.

[18] Stewart, *Longer Time Between Moves Related to Higher Satisfaction and Retention*, 2.

[19] Monte Sahlin and Carmen Rusu "Pastoral Ministry in Seventh-day Adventist Congregations Today*,"* Faith Communities Today, https://circle.adventistlearningcommunity.com/files/icm/nadresearch/PastorMinistries.pdf.

observed practices and applied policies for military personnel can be informative for the pastoral itinerant model, especially for itinerant pastors within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

It is prudent to note the obvious reality the United States' resources far outweigh the resources of the Seventh-Day Adventist Denomination. There can be no comparison in the ability to fund similar military programs and practices. Conversely, because of the close relationship in itinerate praxis, military itineracy applied theories can be extrapolated and contextualized to meet the needs of the itinerate pastor. Utilizing the United States military's data from their exhaustive research on military personnel well-being, contextualized policies, practices, and resources can be fashioned to elevate Pastoral Well-Being within the pastoral itinerate system in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination.

In 1992, a published study by the Rand Corporation reported "concerns that changing family composition and family relations may negatively affect soldiers retention and readiness."[20] This study alludes to the potential attitudes concerning the consistent disruptions of families that accompany enlisted military personnel in the armed forces. There is an indication that attitudes toward the reenlistment and mission objectives can be affected by the unsettledness of family disruptions.

Soldier readiness is a common threat to mission objectives and mission completion. The constant stresses of family disruption affect soldiers and their families.

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[20] M. Audrey Burman, Lisa S. Meredith, Cathy Donald Sherbourne, R. Burciaga Valdez, and Georges Vernez, *Army Families and Soldier Readiness* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1992), 1.

They are "subjected" to familial threats that "individually or in combination are not found in civilian life, or where found, operate at a higher level of intensity in the military."[21]

The Rand Cooperation's study analyzes a series of variables that negatively affect military readiness and attitudes toward reenlistment. Some of these variables range from station placements in rural locations, frequent change of stations, and station locations that vary in educational, cultural, and vocational opportunities.[22]

The researchers at the Rand Cooperation remarked in their study on "Army Families and Soldier Readiness" a prevalent concern of spouses with depressive disorders within the families of service members that experience disruptions. Rand asserts that spouses with depressive disorders may be less able to execute household responsibilities, hence creating greater hardship on the military member, ultimately increasing their overall burden, thus conclusively affecting military readiness.[23]

These studies were driven by concerns about military readiness and reenlistment attitudes concerning military personnel's well-being. Similarly, there are concerns about comparable attitudinal threats in pastoral ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist denominational itinerant model. Attitudes towards pastoral ministry, ministry readiness, pastoral brokenness, church mission execution, and family disruptions are all contending factors affecting the effectiveness of ministry within the Seventh-day Adventist itinerant model.

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[21] Burman, Meredith, Sherbourne, Valdez, Vernez, *Army Families and Soldier Readiness*, 19.

[22] Burman, Meredith, Sherbourne, Valdez, Vernez, *Army Families and Soldier Readiness*, 28-29.

[23] Burman, Meredith, Sherbourne, Valdez, Vernez, *Army Families and Soldier Readiness*, 20.

The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, in a collaborative study with Andrews University (the flagship university of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination) on the "Struggle of Pastoral Families in the Adventist Church," suggests that frequent context moves from district to district within the span of a few years create hardships in maintaining healthy relationships. Children belonging to pastoral families in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination indicated their reticence in fostering new friendships because they knew they would soon experience a change of context.

Like the military readiness problem in Rand's study on "Military Families and Soldiers Readiness," the North American Division of Seventh-Day Adventist's study identifies a common thread of spousal disruption, and it contends, "The pastor's spouse is particularly impacted because his/her job is typically not as mobile."[24]

Causally, attitudes concerning itineracy in the Seventh-day Adventist denominational model are shifting. The data shows a correlation between a decline in attitudes concerning pastoral itineracy and a decline in the number of pastoral ministers in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination in North America. All these factors create a perfect opportunity for depressive disorders to proliferate among pastoral families in the Seventh-day Adventist pastoral itinerate model.

A similar leadership concern should be expressed for the pastoral itinerate context in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination as it was in the military context. Research studies should be conducted, and data collected with the expressed intention to create appropriate policies and programs to support the itinerate pastoral model.

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[24] Andrews University, "The Stresses of Being a Pastor: The Struggle of Pastoral Families in the Adventist Church," Andrews University, https://www.andrews.edu/services/research/publications/research_brochure/2014_brochure/pastoral_stress/index.html

An Example of Policies Crafting a Program for Military Personnel Well-Being

The outcome of military research in Positive Psychology has yielded to certain policies that are utilized to create programs and practices to achieve military personnel well-being. It is important for enlisted military personnel to flourish and to be mission-ready. This project has established a necessity for holistic balance, exhibited in familial stability, as a foundation for well-being. Additionally, the military has collated data from the Rand Corporation that suggest that a flourishing home will marshal military personnel's well-being. Subsequently, if transferable, this theory of well-being will empower denominational leaders to appropriately enable ministers to flourish by bolstering the holistic well-being of the minister.

The creation of military personnel social programming has become the best practice in promoting a culture that values the soldiers' need for well-being. There are intentionally developed programs surrounding the components of "Army moral, welfare, and recreation" (Army MWR) as expressed in the Rand Corporation's study entitled, "Army Moral, Welfare, Recreation Programs in the Future: Maximizing Soldier Benefits in Times of Austerity." The report shares the following in the summary section, "The Army's MWR system is intended to support combat readiness, recruitment, and retention. A variety of services are provided, ranging from libraries to child care."[25]

This government study leverages the need for military personnel readiness against the backdrop of military budget cuts. The desired outcome is the discovery of which programs should be labeled as dispensable versus those that are indispensable and, as

[25] Susan Way-Smith, Edward G. Keating, Peter A. Morrison, and Michael T. Childress, *Army Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Programs in the Future: Maximizing Soldier Benefits in Times of Austerity* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1994), xiii.

such, are deemed necessary for achieving military personnel well-being. This streamlined emphasis highlights the necessity and intentional construct of social programming obligatory to foster a state of flourishing among enlisted personnel and their families.

Several areas are observed, such as installation location (rural or near urban centers), family necessities (e.g., childcare, spousal employment, spousal continued education and certification), and social recreational programs. The Army MWR (Army morale, welfare, and recreation) initiative is focused on the quality of life for military personnel, with the theory that as the quality-of-life increases, so will the readiness and retention levels for enlisted personnel.

One of the prominent services offered to military personnel is childcare. This funded program allows for a decrease in financial and familial stress on the military family. It ultimately reduces the stress and increases the enlisted personnel's production, mission readiness, and reenlistment intention. Recognizing the importance of the family, the report "Examining the Implementation and Outcomes of the Military Child Care Act of 1989" adds, "Key among these supports is childcare, which is variously described by military personnel as an instrument of readiness, a way of "taking care of our own," a tool to increase total family income by allowing spouses to work, and a quality-of-life issue.[26]

These essential programs that equipoise documented areas of work, home, or personal stress provide opportunities for well-being. The military's financial investments in social programming, designed from the scientific conclusions of Positive Psychology, are intended to generate the strongest military force in the world.

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[26] Gail L. Zellman and Anne S. Johansen *Examining the Implementation and Outcomes of the Military Child Care Act of 1989* (Sant Monica, CA: Rand, 1998), 16.

Conclusion

The government of the United States has invested considerable resources in the development of programing that are derived from Positive Psychology. The effort to assist military personnel to flourish is also mutually understood to benefit mission readiness and effectiveness. In the article, "Does the United States Really Have the World's Strongest Military?" the author Richard Douglas suggests that one of the reasons for the United States' military might is their spending power.[27]

In the "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus' teaching on money broaches the subject of financial management and stewardship. Speaking of the allocation of resources, Jesus says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21). This declarative statement lifts the stewardship principle that suggests an allocation of funds based upon priorities, whether they be personal, operational, or missional.

The U.S. military's considerable investment suggests an interest in the well-being of its members. This pivotal interest hinges on the execution of missions and their ability to be victorious in military conflicts and campaigns.

If the Seventh-day Adventist Church denomination continues to flourish, considerable investments must be made in the itinerant pastor's well-being. There should be goodwill in the institution to demonstrate enthusiasm in making investments to significantly bolster the system of itinerancy as modeled by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The value of the pastor and the institution's investment should be commiserated with the missional demands of pastoral itineracy.

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[27] Richard Douglas, "Does the United States Really Have the World's Strongest Military?," The National Interest, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/does-united-states-really-have-world%E2%80%99s-strongest-military-189843.

The hypothesis states that if congregational pastors remain in pastoral assignments for longer pastoral tenures within the pastoral itinerate system, then optimal pastoral well-being is possible. It is in this context of pastoral wholeness that Positive Psychology, with the constructs of the PERMA Well-Being Theory, can lead to a modern model of itinerancy that allows both denominational, organizational, pastoral, and familial flourishing.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction:

> "Many pastors are well aware that they are running on empty, spending too many nights away from home, eating too many meals on the run, and neglecting their spiritual lives and physical well-being."[1]

This project's underlying theme is pastoral wholeness and wellness. As an ordained pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination with more than fifteen years of active ministry, I can anecdotally say that pastoral itineracy is one of the greatest threats to wellness in the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

In sixteen years of ministry, I have pastored five pastoral districts with geographic locations in the state of Florida in the following cities: Orlando, Lakeland, Palm Bay, Miami, and Tampa. On Average, I have ministered for 3.2 years per church district. The impact of this reality is at the heart of this Doctor of Ministry project. This project has an intentional title, "Survey on Pastoral and Congregational Well-Being Amidst Shifting Views on Itineracy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," with emphasis on familial, financial, pastoral, and congregational wholeness and well-being.

The foundation of this project lies in the interplay between my spiritual autobiography and context analysis. Having been raised in a pastoral family, I witnessed

[1] Bruce Epperly, *A Center In the Cyclone Twenty-First Century Clergy Self-Care* (Lanham, MD: Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 27-28.

firsthand the familial disruptions, financial challenges, and stressors associated with pastoral itinerancy. A pastor functioning under the strain of persistent familial dissatisfaction is less equipped to effectively foster pastoral and congregational well-being.

The implementation of this project seeks to capture qualitatively the attitudes and experiences of pastors who minister within the Seventh-Day Adventist denomination within the geographical context of the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The findings from the implemented project are the outcome of teaching modules conducted through an eight-week symposium with local pastors of the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, pastoral journaling, and focused interviews. The data confirmed the problem expressed in the context analysis.

Additionally, the conclusion of the project analysis has confirmed the stated hypothesis: if Seventh-day Adventist denominational pastors within the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Inc., past and present, attend a six-week symposium about the effects of itineracy on the pastor's family, then pastors will be equipped with ministry tools to change how pastoral itineracy affects family and church well-being through the lenses of church mission execution.

Pastors navigating family disruptions due to the itinerant model face significant pressures that profoundly impact their ability to minister effectively within their local church context. The itinerant system, which frequently uproots pastoral families, often places undue strain on familial relationships, creating cascading challenges that affect every dimension of pastoral life: financial instability due to frequent relocations, spousal

dissatisfaction stemming from a lack of stability, and the disruption of children's education are among the most pressing concerns. These challenges place pastors in an unenviable position where they are forced to prioritize familial needs over pastoral obligations, often ministering from a place of emotional, financial, and spiritual deficit. Such conditions hinder their ability to lead, preach, and nurture their congregations effectively, leaving both pastor and congregation vulnerable to burnout and stagnation.

In addition to its impact on pastoral families, the Seventh-day Adventist itinerant model also disrupts the broader church community. The frequent reassignment of pastors creates a cycle of relational instability, where congregations are left to repeatedly mourn the loss of trusted leaders and adapt to new pastoral appointments. This constant turnover undermines the development of long-term, meaningful relationships between pastors and congregants, which are critical for fostering spiritual growth and organizational stability within the church. Congregations must continuously navigate the challenges of acclimating to a new leader's vision, priorities, and leadership style, which can result in periods of stagnation and conflict.

Moreover, congregations experience collective and cumulative grief in response to these transitions. The loss of relational bonds formed over years of ministry creates a sense of disconnection and instability while building trust with a new pastor requires time and emotional investment that is often prematurely disrupted by yet another reassignment. This constant state of flux can erode the church's overall mission and effectiveness, as both the pastor and congregation are unable to sustain the momentum needed for long-term growth and spiritual development.

The impact of these disruptions extends beyond the relational and emotional toll; they also affect the strategic and organizational health of the church. Pastoral transitions often lead to the discontinuation of programs, ministries, and initiatives established by the outgoing pastor, as the new pastor may bring a different vision or focus. This lack of continuity can stifle congregational progress and frustrate members who have invested time and energy in the church's mission. Additionally, frequent transitions can weaken the church's ability to build trust and credibility within the broader community, as the constant change in leadership may signal instability or lack of commitment from the conference's administration.

Ultimately, the Seventh-day Adventist itinerant model presents significant challenges for pastors, their families, and the congregations they serve. The relational, emotional, and structural disruptions caused by frequent reassignments diminish the potential for sustained spiritual growth and ministry effectiveness. Addressing these systemic issues is essential to fostering a pastoral ministry model that prioritizes the pastoral family's well-being and the church community's stability and growth. Without such adjustments, the current model risks perpetuating cycles of grief, instability, and inefficiency that undermine the mission and vision of the church.

The central premise of this dissertation project is that a stronger pastoral family leads to a stronger and more effective pastor, and a stronger and more effective pastor fosters a healthier, flourishing church that operates in a state of well-being. Pastoral families are the foundation upon which the pastor's emotional, spiritual, and mental well-being is built. When this foundation is weakened by the challenges of pastoral itinerancy, it undermines not only the pastor's ability to lead effectively but also the church's

capacity to thrive under their leadership. Educating pastors about the unique challenges posed by pastoral itinerancy is a critical step toward equipping them to navigate its effects on their families and their ministry contexts.

Pastoral itinerancy introduces significant disruptions into the lives of pastoral families. Issues such as spousal dissatisfaction, the loss of spousal employment, disruptions in children's education, and the erosion of family morale create stressors that can diminish a pastor's ability to focus on their ministry. These challenges are often compounded by the lack of institutional support or preparation for the toll itinerancy takes on family dynamics. As a result, many pastors minister from a place of emotional, spiritual, and financial deficit, which can compromise their effectiveness and hinder their ability to fulfill their church's mission.

Addressing these systemic challenges is vital not only for the well-being of pastors and their families but also for the health of the church itself. Frequent disruptions in pastoral leadership caused by the itinerant model affect the church community, leading to instability, relational strain, and a loss of momentum in ministry initiatives. When pastors are unable to fully invest in their church contexts due to the challenges faced at home, the entire church body suffers. The success of a church is inextricably linked to the well-being of its pastoral leader and, by extension, their family. Therefore, creating a support system that equips pastoral families to navigate the effects of itinerancy is essential for the long-term vitality of the church. Such a strategy should be one of the ongoing focal administrative initiatives for the Seventh-day Adventist conferences.

This project posits that refining the itinerant model and equipping pastors with tools to mitigate its negative effects will lead to measurable improvements in ministry

outcomes. Providing pastors and their families with resources to address issues such as emotional resilience, financial planning, and educational continuity for children can alleviate some of the most pressing challenges of itinerancy. Additionally, creating opportunities for pastors to engage in open dialogue about these challenges can foster a sense of community and shared understanding, reducing feelings of isolation and increasing morale.

Understanding the potential for spousal dissatisfaction and other familial disruptions also highlights the need for institutions to adopt proactive measures to support pastoral families. Offering professional development opportunities for spouses, facilitating stable educational pathways for children, and providing counseling or coaching services for pastoral families can help address some of the unintended consequences of the itinerant model. These interventions benefit the individual pastor and strengthen the broader ministry context by creating stability and reducing burnout.

Moreover, educating pastors and their families about the realities of itinerancy is not only a matter of addressing challenges but also of empowering them to thrive within the system. When pastors are equipped with the tools to balance family and ministry responsibilities effectively, they are better positioned to lead their congregations with clarity, focus, and passion. A pastor who ministers from a place of stability and well-being is far more likely to inspire and sustain a flourishing church community.

The implications of this education extend beyond the individual pastor to the entire body of Christ. Stronger pastoral families lead to stronger pastors, and stronger pastors lead to healthier churches. This positive cycle has the potential to transform not only individual ministry contexts but also the wider denomination by fostering a culture

of well-being, stability, and growth. The mere act of raising awareness and providing education about these issues can result in profound benefits for the church. As churches become healthier, they are better equipped to fulfill their mission and serve as vibrant, transformative agents in their communities.

In summary, this project underscores the need for a holistic approach to pastoral well-being that integrates the needs of the pastor, their family, and the church community. By addressing the systemic challenges of pastoral itinerancy and providing practical solutions, this project seeks to empower pastors and their families to thrive, thereby strengthening the church's capacity to fulfill its mission. The goal is not merely to educate but to transform, creating a pathway for pastoral families, pastors, congregations, and conference administrators to flourish together in the shared work of ministry.

Methodology

This project employs a mixed-methods approach, using qualitative data to evaluate the impact of pastoral itinerancy on pastoral families and congregations. It was conducted via a symposium with six teaching modules over an eight-week period, and data was collected using four distinct methods.

The first method utilized is the pre- and post-project questionnaires. At the center of the methodology is an eight-question, data-driven questionnaire specifically designed to assess participants' awareness, comfortability, and perceptions regarding pastoral itinerancy. This instrument served as a critical tool for gathering insights before and after the project implementation phase.

This method also measured the learning gap through variances in collected data before and after the teaching modules were executed during the eight-week symposium. The measured educational growth is central to this method.

The second method of data collection employed in this project is focused, one-on-one interviews. This qualitative approach was designed to supplement the data gathered through surveys, and it provided deeper and more nuanced insights into participants' lived experiences and perspectives. Focused interviews fostered a more personal and conversational format that elicited a safe space conducive to honesty and openness in ways that could not have been easily facilitated simply through structured questionnaires.

The primary objectives of focused interviews are as follows: They primarily create a one-on-one setting that provides participants with a safe and confidential environment. This method encourages the participants to share candid thoughts, emotions, and experiences related to pastoral itinerancy. Additionally, this setting minimizes the potential for social desirability bias that may arise in group settings and gives participants opportunities to be their authentic selves.

Moreover, these focused interviews allowed participants to elaborate on their responses, offering rich, voluminous data that was used to collect insights not easily captured in a survey format. Participants were given opportunities to share in ways that were authentic to their personalities.

The third method of data collection involved facilitated group discussions conducted immediately after the teaching modules. This approach was intentionally designed to capture participants’ real-time reflections, insights, and reactions while the information presented was still fresh and easily recalled. These discussions provided

opportunities for immediate feedback on the content covered and encouraged meaningful dialogue and the sharing of diverse perspectives. Through these exchanges, participants were able to explore their individual subjective interactions with the itinerant system as practiced by the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, deepening the collective understanding of its impact and implications.

There are several reasons for the utilization of this data collection method, chiefly facilitated group discussions as it relates to this project captured immediate responses. When conducting discussions immediately after each session, participants were able to share their initial reactions, perspectives, and insights without the delay that might diminish recall accuracy. Additionally, facilitated group discussions served to encourage collaborative learning. The group settings promoted an exchange of ideas, allowing participants to reflect not only on their experiences but also on the perspectives shared by others, which led to deeper insights. The third and final reason for facilitated group discussions was to facilitate the identification of emerging themes. These discussions provided opportunities to observe and document collective patterns and themes that might not surface in individual settings.

The data collection methodology's final component involved using a pre-existing instrument, the PERMAH Profiler. This tool is grounded in the PERMA Theory of Well-Being, which served as a foundational framework for the project’s interdisciplinary foundation and its intended purpose of introducing the integration of positive psychology in the project. The PERMAH Profiler is designed to measure and assess individual well-being across six key domains: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Positive Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment, and Health.

By providing a comprehensive measurement of well-being, this tool enabled participating pastors to assess their personal well-being within the context of the demands and stressors associated with pastoral itinerancy. The PERMAH instruments also created a baseline for intervention. The PERMAH Profiler established a baseline score for each participant, providing a foundation for comparative analysis following project intervention implementation and recommended practices to improve future scores. In addition to its evaluative function, the PERMAH Profiler fostered and enhanced self-awareness among participants. A key benefit of this tool was its ability to empower individuals to reflect on their overall well-being, enabling them to identify specific areas for growth and set targeted goals for improvement.

In terms of data analysis, this collection method categorized participants within measurable quadrants, reflecting their PERMAH scores at a specific point in time. The analysis derived from this approach revealed identifiable trends, particularly in relation to different stages of life and phases of ministry.

Implementation

In recent years, attitudes toward pastoral itinerancy have shifted noticeably, and there is a growing call for intentional emphasis on the well-being of pastors and congregations within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. This evolving perspective has created opportunities to reevaluate and reimagine the pastoral model in ways that align with the contemporary realities and challenges of the church's context. A holistic, well-being-centered approach to itinerancy holds the potential to enhance not only the

personal lives of pastors and their families but also the overall effectiveness of the church's mission.

The success of this project was rooted in its ability to foster a measurable shift in viewpoints, emphasizing a synergistic model where pastoral well-being is prioritized. Participants overwhelmingly echoed when the emotional, spiritual, relational, physical, familial, and financial well-being of pastors is recognized as foundational, healthier, and more effective ministries can naturally follow. Participants believed that stronger ministries would lead to stronger congregations, resulting in a church better equipped to fulfill its mission. This project sought to demonstrate that when pastoral well-being is paramount, the ripple effect positively impacts the individual pastor and their family and the vitality and growth of their congregations. This ideal was an agreed belief that, if practiced, would represent a meaningful transformation in the denomination's leadership model, ensuring the mission and its leaders thrive.

The project outcomes were realized through the implementation of six learning modules presented to a strategically chosen participant group of active pastors, conference officials, and retired ministers operating within the Southeastern Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a part of the North American Division.

The participant group represented a diverse demographic and professional cross-section:

Gender representation (20%) were female pastors, and (80%) were male pastors. Diversity of ministerial experience 40% had more than twenty years of pastoral ministry experience. Forty percent had between fifteen to twenty years of pastoral ministry experience.

Twenty percent had fewer than fifteen years of pastoral ministry experience. Regarding leadership roles, all participants were ordained pastors. Two participants were currently serving in denominational leadership positions, and two were retired pastors with over forty-five years of pastoral ministry and denominational leadership experience. This diversity in perspectives enriched the discussions and ensured the data reflected a wide range of lived experiences within the itinerancy model as practiced in the project context.

The eight-week project included six foundational teaching modules conducted in a hybrid format to accommodate participants located outside Central Florida. Although 90% of the sessions were held in person, 10% were conducted virtually due to the impact of Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton, which disrupted the ability to gather physically.

Each teaching module lasted sixty minutes. The principal investigator facilitated 90% of the sessions, and guest facilitators with expertise relevant to the subject matter conducted the remaining 10%. The modules were designed to educate participants on itinerancy's historical, theological, and practical dimensions while emphasizing strategies for fostering pastoral and congregational well-being.

The facilitated group discussions incorporated into each session were critical to the project's success. Participants engaged in discussions during and after each module, creating opportunities to reflect on the content, share experiences, and collaboratively explore solutions. Participants highly valued these discussions, as they allowed for the exchange of perspectives shaped by diverse lived experiences and theological frameworks.

In addition to group discussions, participants were offered the opportunity to partake in focused individual interviews. This method addressed the sensitive nature of certain topics that might not have been shared openly in group settings. The interviews encouraged participants to express honest perspectives and recount personal experiences without fear of judgment and or professional reprisal. The data collected during these one-on-one conversations provided rich qualitative insights and authenticity to the project outcomes.

The final data collection tool was the PERMAH Profiler, a validated instrument designed to measure workplace well-being across six domains: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Positive Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment, and Health. Each participant completed the PERMAH assessment, which generated a personal score and an accompanying report highlighting strengths, weaknesses, and actionable strategies for improvement. This tool was instrumental in helping participants assess their holistic well-being in the context of their ministerial duties.

The project yielded a wealth of data that was analyzed, and the findings tell a definitive story from the perspectives of pastors within the Southeastern Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preliminary results indicate that participants valued the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue, deepen their understanding of itinerancy's impact on overall church health and all its subparts, and identify practical strategies for improvement.

This data provided insights for denominational leaders seeking actionable mobility in refining the itinerant model with a reimagined focus to prioritize pastoral and congregational well-being. Moreover, the data also reinforced the central theme of the

hypothesis for the project: that fostering pastoral well-being is essential for creating thriving congregations and advancing the church's mission.

The implementation of this project has demonstrated the viability of reimagining the itinerant model to meet contemporary needs. It will ensure that pastors, their families, their congregations, and conference administration all experience greater health, stability, and success in ministry.

The first week of the project's implementation phase served as an opportunity to introduce the project to the respondents of this project. Twenty-five invitations were extended to pastors within the geographic territory of the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and ten ministers responded in the affirmative and consented to be a part of the project. This meeting established the parameters and expectations for our project's functional and dynamic operation. The meeting cadences were shared, resulting in some proposed schedule shits to ensure maximum participation during our meeting times.

The informed consent agreement was reviewed and submitted to participants. The information collected will be secured in a protected location for the recommended period, which is acceptable in accordance with ethical practices. Participants were informed that every effort would be made to keep their identities confidential, and the collected documents and materials would be randomized for this purpose.

Participants utilized their "childhood addresses" as participant identifiers. The identifiers allowed the principal investigator to collate and aggregate data and create an organizational flow that did not compromise integrity and identity. This level of security enabled participants to fully immerse themselves in the project. Following the

introductory formalities for the project, the pre-survey questionnaire was conducted. The following questionnaire was administered:

1. Are you familiar with Pastoral Itineracy? If so, please define to the best of your ability Pastoral Itineracy?
2. What is your understanding of theological principles for Pastoral Itineracy? Would you agree that Pastoral Itineracy is a Theological Practice? Explain your Theological Stance of Pastoral Itineracy.
3. As Seventh Day Adventist Pastor, please share how the denominational model of itineracy is or is not in alignment with the biblical principle of Pastoral Itineracy.
4. In what ways has Pastoral Itineracy impacted your family professionally, financially, and educationally?
5. In the current national context of inflation, cost of living, and difficulty in finding employment, is the Seventh-day Adventist model of Pastoral Itineracy practical for the pastor? If not, what are some mitigating practices that pastors and their families can utilize to offset these realities?
6. In what ways does Pastoral Itineracy impact the well-being of the pastoral ministry and congregational health?
7. Do you recommend any changes in the Seventh-Day Adventist Pastoral Itinerate Model to promote pastoral and congregational well-being? If so, what changes?
8. What recommended changes would you suggest pastors and their families adopt in navigating the Seventh-day Adventist Pastoral Itinerate model?

The first module taught was “Biblical Perspective of the Itinerant System In the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination” (Biblical Foundation). The principal investigator taught the lesson plan, “Synergy in Ministry: Planting, Watering, Growing- a Ministry of Well-Being.” The lesson plan is an exegetical survey of the Pauline letter to the church of Corinth found in 1 Corinthians 3:6-11.

Consistent with the lesson plan, this teaching module lasted forty minutes, and participants opted not to take any breaks. The learning module was marked with much engagement, and participants shared thoughts on the biblical text. Following the teaching module, the principal investigator facilitated a group discussion and fielded questions about the biblical applications forwarded during the module regarding Pastoral Itineracy as viewed from a New Testament and Pauline perspective. The following facilitated group discussion questions (standard throughout each module)

1. How was this information?
2. What was your biggest takeaway from this week’s presentation and discussion?
3. How did this event impact your perception of our company?
4. Please share any additional comments, thoughts, or suggestions for future sessions.

The principal investigator presented and taught the teaching module on the historical perspective of the Itinerant System in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination. This module was subdivided into three equally timed lesson plans: “The History of Pastoral Itineracy in the Christian Church,” “The History of Pastoral Itineracy

in the Seventh-day Adventist Context," and "Data of Seventh-day Adventist Pastors and Churches Attitudes on Pastoral Itineracy."

The lesson plans were designed to be foundational for a proper understanding of Pastoral Itineracy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They traced itinerant vestiges to their predecessors and other denominations, some of which the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination finds some of its practices. The emphasis was on dissuading the common belief that his practice is unique and that obstacles are solely to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Moreover, ministers must understand the historical significance of Pastoral Itineracy for the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in relation to its effectiveness in early denominational growth and mission execution. This reality could possibly explain denominational administrators' reticence to review the system and refine it.

Additionally, this teaching module includes anecdotal data from Seventh-day Adventist pastors concerning the current practice. The intended purpose of sharing this data was to examine the gulf between the past and the present. The shared data included candid dialogue about the current socioeconomic context compared to that of the denominational pioneers who were responsible for crafting the current system of pastoral itineracy during the mid to late 1800s.

The teaching module shared with the participants focused on a theological perspective of transcending happiness in the now. The lesson plan was entitled "A Theology on God's Perspective, Purpose, and Projection of God's Creation." The emphasis was on a survey of the creation narrative, with a thematic and theological

crescendo found in Genesis 1:31. God's declaration concerning his creation prior to Genesis 1:31 was that his creative work was "Good."

The lesson plan emphasized a kinetic movement from a perfect divine declaration of "Good to Very Good." A subtle but definite shift in the biblical narrative encapsulates a divine theology of not just good but very good. The implication shared with the participant is the development of a theology of positivity and well-being. Reinforced with other biblical texts, expressed in this project's biblical foundation, is an expansion of a theology of well-being woven throughout the holy scriptures.

One of the project's professional associates, Dr. Herman Davis, facilitated this lesson plan. Dr. Davis holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary located at Andrews University, with over fifty years of pastoral ministry and experiences both in the church and conference leadership contexts. Dr. Davis' presentation topic was "Mitigating the Effects of Pastoral Itineracy." The information disseminated focused on pastoral finances, financial investments, familial connectivity and planning, and strategies for positive interactions with conference administrators.

The title for this teaching module was "A Psychological Perspective on Transcending Happiness in The Now." Mr. Orville Anderson, a board-certified behavioral clinician with over twenty years of experience, presented on Positive Psychology. The lesson plan included defining crucial terms in relation to happiness, well-being, flourishing, and psychology.

In a didactic format, Mr. Anderson explored how these defined terms could be applied to pastoral ministry within the context of the itinerant system. Additionally, best

practices were shared on effecting positive shifts to facilitate progress in well-being. Moreover, this lesson plan emphasized the importance of understanding the emotional impact of negative experiences versus positive experiences with pastoral itineracy as practiced in the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The project participants were introduced to the PERMAH assessment. The lesson plan continues from Meeting #6. The principal investigator shared the theory of PERMAH as part of the teaching module. Following a five-minute break, the principal investigator demonstrated how to take the PERMAH assessment. Instructions were given for Focused Individual Interviews to be conducted during this week.

Focused Individual Interviews:

1. How has Pastoral Itineracy impacted your marriage?
2. How has Pastoral Itineracy impacted your children?
3. How has Pastoral Itineracy impacted your finances?
4. Has Pastoral Itineracy impacted your ministry?
5. As best as you can tell, how has Pastoral Itineracy impacted your congregation?
6. Do you believe Pastoral Itineracy impacts congregational mission? If so, in what way?
7. If given the opportunity, is there anything that you would change in how the Seventh-day Adventist church implements Pastoral Itineracy? If so, what would you change?

8. Since starting in pastoral ministry, how has your attitude toward Pastoral Itineracy shifted?
9. Do you believe ministers are affected differently by the pastoral itinerate model in different stages of ministry? If so, which stage of ministry do you believe is most vulnerable?
10. Ideally, how would you prefer the practice of pastoral itineracy be conducted?

The final meeting of the project implementation was to review the six teaching modules, discuss the next steps for the project, give final instructions, and provide participants with an opportunity to share their participation experiences. The Post-Project Questionnaire was administered

Project Questionnaire

1. Are you familiar with Pastoral Itineracy? If so, please define to the best of your ability Pastoral Itineracy?
2. What is your understanding of theological principles for Pastoral Itineracy? Would you agree that Pastoral Itineracy is a Theological Practice? Explain your Theological Stance of Pastoral Itineracy.
3. As Seventh Day Adventist Pastor, please share how the denominational model of itineracy is or is not in alignment with the biblical principle of Pastoral Itineracy.
4. In what ways has Pastoral Itineracy impacted your family professionally, financially, and educationally?

5. In the current national context of inflation, the cost of living, and difficulty finding employment, is the Seventh-day Adventist model of Pastoral Itineracy practical for the pastor? If not, what are some mitigating practices that pastors and their families can utilize to offset these realities?
6. In what ways does Pastoral Itineracy impact the well-being of the pastoral ministry and congregational health?
7. Do you recommend any changes in the Seventh-day Adventist Pastoral Itinerate Model to promote pastoral and congregational well-being? If so, what changes?
8. What recommended changes would you suggest pastors and their families adopt in navigating the Seventh-day Adventist Pastoral Itinerate model?

Professional and Context Associates

The four professional associates played a key role in streamlining and refining the project implementation phase. They actively participated in meetings and provided the principal investigator with ongoing evaluative feedback throughout the implementation process. Notably, one of the professional associates served as a lecturer during Meeting Five. The context associates were involved in the implementation phase as participants. Their familiarity with the project allowed them to offer valuable insights during meetings and make informed suggestions to help achieve the project's stated objectives.

Summary of Learning

The data collected reveals a compelling narrative that reflects the sentiments of pastors serving in the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Indicators suggest that pastoral staff's overall well-being is below average compared to active denominational pastors within this context. Following the predetermined data collection methods, the implementation phase yielded extensive data through surveys, interviews, assessments, and group dialogues. Additionally, the dynamic interactions within the participant group provided further valuable insights.

The participant group comprised a cross-demographic representation of the following ministry profiles: two women, eight men, two retired former conference administrators, two current conference administrators, and six pastors actively engaged in church ministry, one of whom serves as an associate pastor. Collectively, this group represented 265 cumulative years of pastoral ministry experience and an average of 58 church districts served across their careers, ranging from five to forty years in ministry.

This diverse group reflects a wealth of lived experiences within the itinerant pastoral system practiced in the Southeastern Conference and underscores a broader systemic issue. The data begin to articulate a mathematical challenge that this project aims to address: the system's impact on pastoral and congregational well-being. As of 2022, according to the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, housed at the General Conference of Seventh-Adventist, records the Southeastern Conference operated 155 churches with 110 licensed and ordained pastors.

An analysis of this data suggests that 10% of the pastors who participated in this project if the current three-year pastoral appointment norm persists, will have pastored

over 50% of the church districts within the conference territory over the course of their careers. This trend highlights a system that prioritizes administrative decisions over the mission and potentially limits pastors' ability to achieve meaningful ministerial goals within their assigned contexts. The high rate of pastoral transitions paints a picture of instability, suggesting a need to reevaluate the itinerant model to support pastoral and congregational well-being better.

There are four distinct data points that directly impact the project's hypothesis; "if Seventh-day Adventist denominational pastors within the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Inc., past and present, attend a six-week symposium about the effects of itineracy on the pastor's family, then pastors will be equipped with ministry tools to change how pastoral itineracy affects family and church well-being through the lenses of church mission execution." The pre- and post-project questionnaires, the facilitated group discussions, the focused individual interviews, and the PERMAH assessment all effectively gave the participants learned information, the exchange of perspectives, opportunities to assess the individual impact of itineracy on the pastor and their own families as well as the opportunity to assess their level of well-being.

Initially, the narrative formulated during the pre-project questionnaire is one of frustration with the status quo and the frustration that pastoral staff have not assessed their value with the administrators who shepherd the work from a conferenced leadership point. Moreover, there is an empathic response to the overwhelming negative impacts of itineracy on the pastor, the pastor's family, and the pastor's congregation.

One hundred percent of the participants demonstrated some knowledge of what Pastoral Itineracy is, with key mechanical parts of the definition included in the various

responses. Twenty percent of the participants appropriately defined Pastoral Itineracy with a negative connotation. For example, one participant writes, “Pastors not having a permanent residence, and being moved without consultation.” Another writes, “Pastoral Itineracy relates to life movement and relocations during a pastorate and its various impacts.” The participants proficiently understand Pastoral Itineracy, but there seems to be a parallel reality that is experiential and not merely cognitive.

One of the pre- and post-project questionnaire questions registered a significant shift in question number two, “What is your understanding of the theological principle of Pastoral Itineracy? Would you agree that Pastoral Itineracy is a theological practice? Explain your theological stance on Pastoral Itineracy.” Pre-project implementation, 50% of participants could and could not agree that Pastoral Itineracy was a theological practice. Post-project, 100% of the participants agreed that, as a general practice, pastoral itineracy is theological. This 50% increase could be attributed to both the biblical and theological foundations provided by the biblical text woven narrative of mobility to those called by God to meet the needs of the children of God.

Another key indicator that the data collected affirmed the project hypothesis was question number three of the pre and post-questionnaire, “As a Seventh-Day Adventist Pastor, please share how the denominational model of Pastoral Itineracy is or is not in alignment with the biblical principle of Pastoral Itineracy.” Initially, 20 % thought that Pastoral Itineracy as practiced by the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists aligned with biblically and theologically. Post-project, 0% saw proper biblical alignment with the practice of Pastoral Itineracy within the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

A more nuanced response to the question is lost in the survey; however, the following thoughts were gathered from the biblical and theological teaching modules captured through facilitated dialogue. “It seems like over time; we have had to make the NT itineracy model fit the contextual needs of the modern SDA society and church.” “Biblically, it seemed as though itineracy was used to start and train churches and members on how to run the church.” “I don’t believe we see pastoral itineracy at all in the Bible in a way that coincides with our denominational model. We see an Apostolic model of itineracy in the NT and perhaps a prophetic model of itineracy in the Old Testament, but the Adventist pastorate is singularly defined by neither of those models.” “The SDA itineracy model is different than the biblical model of itineracy in that, as far as we can tell, itineracy was employed to build up new communities of faith, not merely to maintain already established ones. For example, when Paul left one place of ministry, he was not replaced by another Apostle. Continuing leadership in that local was raised up from that local to continue in his stead. There was no “fruit basket upset” as we have in Adventism. EGW’s “settling over churches” statement speaks somewhat to this issue.” Some of these responses indicate that the current adaptation of the Pastoral Itineracy as practiced by the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists does not align with the practice that participants 100% agree is theologically based.

A critical piece of data extrapolated from the pre- and post-project questionnaires was derived from question seven: “Do you recommend any changes in the Seventh-day Adventist Pastoral Itinerancy model to aid in promoting pastoral and congregational well-being? If so, what are some possible changes?” In both the pre- and post-project surveys,

100% of respondents answered affirmatively, indicating unanimous agreement that the current itinerancy system requires refinement.

Notably, the data suggests two key recommendations for improving the system. First, respondents advocated for longer pastoral assignments to allow pastors sufficient time to establish meaningful relationships and achieve ministerial goals within their congregations. Second, the data highlighted the need for a more transparent decision-making process that fully involves the pastoral family, the congregation, and the conference administration. As proposed by the participants, these changes aim to foster and refine the system that prioritizes both pastoral and congregational well-being.

The project participants were asked to journal to collect additional data. Through reflective engagement prompted by the teaching modules, journal entries allowed participants to provide more thoughtful and thorough responses to the project's central problem. To ensure the efficacy of this project in testing the hypothesis, particular attention is given to journal entries that address areas not captured in the data from the pre- and post-survey questionnaires.

A critical component of this project's success lies in testing the interdisciplinary foundation that underscores the necessity for pastors to be intentional about their emotional well-being. This emphasis is rooted in the principles of Positive Psychology and is measured through the PERMAH framework, which serves as a guiding theory for assessing well-being within this context.

Journal assignment number five recorded the personal analysis of the teaching module on Positive Psychology as presented by Mr. Anderson. Captured in the data is full agreement that well-being is necessary for pastoral leaders to be effective in the

execution of their pastoral duties. Wellness as explained, is not the absence of hardship but rather the pursuit of joy amidst any context. The following are some of the more impactful journal entries captures:

"I agree with the philosophy of wellness. However, my concern is how many pastors can realistically control all aspects of their personal well-being. As employees, we are subject to decisions made by our employer, such as relocations, demotions, or discouragement, which can significantly limit our ability to achieve complete wellness." "Joy in one's life contributes to happiness, which, in turn, fosters personal fulfillment—this is the essence of wellness. When a pastor feels seen, heard, and understood by their leaders, a sense of wholeness emerges, forming the foundation of their well-being. True well-being also involves ensuring the pastor's family is secure, addressing their unique social needs, and providing support during times of loss or bereavement that pastoral families may experience."

"We had a wonderful time, Mr. Anderson. During our discussions, I came to the realization that there is much I must do personally to cultivate an environment that fosters a positive sense of pastoral well-being. This involves taking intentional steps to prioritize my emotional, spiritual, and physical health and creating boundaries and practices that allow me to thrive in my ministry. It has become clear to me that achieving well-being requires a proactive approach to managing the challenges of pastoral life while also ensuring I can serve effectively and sustainably."

"This session was dynamic and served as a powerful reminder of the importance of leadership maintaining a strong, personal connection with the Lord. The session highlighted the synergy between spiritual leadership and well-being, emphasizing that

Jesus came to provide abundant life, and that well-being is central to God's purpose for humanity. The concept of happiness was presented as transcendental, rooted in God's declaration and goal of goodness for His creation. Well-being, as designed by God, is not separate from purpose but is intricately connected to it. This understanding reinforces the idea that pastoral itinerancy should consider the holistic well-being of pastors, aligning their purpose with their emotional, spiritual, and physical health to better fulfill their mission."

The idea centers on receiving the requisite tools to pursue pastoral and congregational well-being. The journal entries provide further insight into the necessity of addressing pastors' well-being in congregational ministry. The primary takeaway from this set of journal entries is that 100% of the participants agree that well-being is a necessary ideal to pursue if pastors and congregations are to flourish.

A common theme in the journal entries seems to suggest that well-being is accessible primarily through external means. Some participants concluded that well-being is impossible to achieve in a system where administrators control every aspect of the minister's professional and personal life. This notion proves dangerous because it grants too much authority to external forces that require appropriate personal barriers. The theory of transcendence suggests that well-being is a possible event with challenges. The journals suggest a resolve to pursue well-being.

Journal entry number six recorded the participating pastor's response not only to the other PERMAH Theory but also to begin to put in place a qualitative tool to measure their personal well-being within the workplace or, in this context, the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The response to this construct based in phycology

parsed several areas that are affected by the Pastoral Itineracy within pastoral ministry. Positive Emotions, Engagement, Positive Relationship, Meaning, Accomplishment, and Health.

The natural function of ministry encroaches on each of these items individually. A PERMAH assessment was executed, and participants were able to see how they fared through each single virtue and, overall, how they scored in well-being. The responses shared through the data suggest that Pastoral Itineracy, as practiced currently in the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, affects individual scores. The available results of the assessment are represented in coordinating quadrants listed in image 1.

Your State of Well-being and Job Satisfaction

High Thriving

High. Struggle.	Living well Despite Struggles 29%	Consistently Thriving
	Really Struggling	Not Feeling bad, just getting by 71%

Low Struggle

Low Thriving

Two major emerging trends are located in the PERMAH assessment and are essential to this study. First, out of the ten participants, only two were assessed as high-thriving, and the rest were Low-Thriving. Based on their identifiers, the High-Thriving participants were retired ministers with over forty years of ministry. Second, none of the participants were assessed as Really Struggling or Consistently Thriving.

According to the PERMAH Assessment, the effects of Pastoral Itineracy as practiced in the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists do not affect extreme polarity. Ministers are not Consistently Thriving at a high capacity, and neither are ministers Really Struggling at a low capacity. An argument that could be made for a narrative that extrapolated from this data is the reality that Pastoral Itineracy as practiced in this context, produces merely a "Good" ideal and not the "Very Good" ideal from the theological foundation forwarded as a necessary outtake for the practice.

Moreover, the most stunning narrative told by the data is the demographic of high-thriving participants versus low-thriving participants. The active ministers were assessed as low-thriving, and the retired were assessed as high-thriving. This data in this format simply shows the trend; however, focused individual interviews further explored this trend. The focused interviews unearthed the emerging trend encapsulated in the PERMAH assessment. The retired pastors are high-thriving because they function without the imposition of conference administrators. Although officially retired, they are still functionally engulfed in ministry and serve as church administrators. Untethered to the conference's policies and practices, the participating retired ministers can execute their duties out of duty to God and not to men. The participating pastors who are actively pastoring were assessed at Not Felling Bad, Just Getting By. Individual Interviews suggest that pastoral dissatisfaction, familial disruption, financial hardship, and an opaque itinerant system are the current sources of the low-thriving scores.

The current national financial landscape and the lack of professional stability create hardships for ministers attempting to establish themselves. There is a sense from the active participating pastors that contemporary ministry has a set of adversities that

previous pastoral generations did not have to meander. With inflation at an all-time high, outpacing the wage scale, the sense of not having the opportunity to find financial footing is a common trend and an additional reason for the low-thriving assessment.

The focused Interviews captured the common theme that Pastoral Itineracy is biblical and has great value. They also recommended refining this biblical practice to meet the ministry's current needs. Finally, the most compelling data collected was the effect of the Pastoral Itineracy of the pastor's family. Through real emotions, 100% of participants shared how this system personally affected their families. Participants' experiences differed, but each had a compelling story about the effects of the itinerant system.

- A pastor shares that the delusion of this marriage and the disintegration of his family was a direct result of Pastoral Itineracy
- A pastor shares that his spouse has given up searching for gainful employment. Creating financial hardship. The wife was tired of having to find new employment.
- A pastor shares a lost zeal for ministry. "Ministry has become more than ministry!" The pastor recounts his experiences of being transferred three times in a five-year period simply because of "conference politics."
- A pastor shares the experience of advocating with conference administration for the opportunity to remain in the city where the spouse was enrolled in medical school, only to be told, "We hired you, not your spouse!"

- A pastor shares the experience of traveling six hours daily to his ministry assignment to protect his homeownership investment.

The project implementation phase unearthed much through the collected data. A narrative of frustration, professional dissatisfaction, emotional trauma, and grief was captured. Moreover, a resolve to improve a system for the next generation of pastors in the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was also captured. One participant shared, "Do not throw out the baby with the bath water," a familiar saying that means to keep the good and refine the problematic aspects.

Conclusion

This project is the journey of a lifetime. It was born in my spiritual autobiography and confirmed after a thorough analysis of my context. For the participants in this project, pastoral itineracy created pastoral family disruptions, financial hardship, and spousal underemployment or employment loss. With tenures for pastoral appointments averaging nearly three years, Pastoral Itineracy created certain legitimate problems that affected not only pastors and their families but also the church community in relation to church well-being and mission.

This project sought to survey a system that data suggest is problematic. Donella Meadows, speaking on systems, says, "The most powerful way to influence the behavior of a system is through its purpose or goal. That's because the goal is the direction-setter of the system, the definer of discrepancies that require action, the indicator of compliance, failure, or success toward which balancing feedback loops work."[2]

[2] Donella Meadows, *Thinking in Systems: The Primer* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008), 163.

What is the defined purpose and goal of Pastoral Itineracy in the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists? If it is merely to facilitate the various demands of the ministry, a plausible argument can be made that the system operates as pre-determined. However, if the goal is to propel mission and evangelistic growth within the territory, the findings of this project begin to suggest structural change.

It is pragmatic that systems work as they are intended to. Itinerary was never designed to become a burden. Historically, itineracy was envisioned to promote efficiency within the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination, whose member population was outpacing the pastor-to-church ratio. To meet these needs, church districts were created to facilitate ministry and cover the ministry costs of Seventh-day Adventist Pastors who were solely employed by the church.

At the core of the initial implementation were poignant realities of congregational health and pastoral health. To have a pastoral presence, Pastoral Itineracy, initially functioned as territorial circuits to be traveled by pastors. Moreover, churches were grouped together to ensure the pastor's financial stability, and finances were combined to cover the minister’s salary. The system was operated with a synergistic model in mind. Central to this model was if the pastor flourish, then the congregation will flourish, and if the congregation flourishes, then the mission will flourish, and God will give the increase.

There are sets of contextual truths exposed by the collected data that affect the outcome of this current system of Pastoral Itineracy. First, the family of the pastor is an extension of the pastor. They are vital to the overall well-being of the pastor and the congregation. According to the collected data, participants advocate for church

administrators to view the entirety of the Pastoral family and simply not the pastor alone. Decisions made that only have the pastor as the central variable will enable the system to remain ineffective. Every variable available to decision-makers must be considered.

Logically, the only way to gain access to the multiplicity of variables necessary to make such a decision can only be learned through informed conversation between conference administrators, pastoral families, and congregations. The frequent assumption of pastoral appointments made absent key stakeholders creates missed opportunities to allow for the system to perform as it is intended to.

Much demand is made on the pastor. Pastors must become all things to all people. The pastor is in high demand in the home, fulfilling spousal roles. There is a demand for the pastor from the community to be present and to advocate for those in need. Moreover, there are an array of demands from the congregation. Additionally, there are demands and expectations from the conference. As expressed through the collected data, pastors experienced such demands that threatened their well-being.

> Many pastors are well aware that they are running on empty, spending too many nights away from home, eating too many meals on the run, and neglecting their spiritual lives and physical well-being. But, despite recognizing that their habits are undermining their quality of life and ability to maintain long-term ministerial excellence, these pastors appear caught in a vicious cycle from which there appears to be no escape.[3]

Bruce Epperly captures the reality of ministry under such demands. The genius of the conference administrative structure should be a place where tools are disseminated, and policies are erected to promote well-being. There is a pathway for the conference to actively support the well-being of their employed pastors.

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[3] Bruce Epperly, *A Center In the Cyclone Twenty-First Century Clergy Self-Care* (Lanham, MD: Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 27-28.

The impetus will have to be one that is not self-serving but rather one that is inclusive of every variable that makes up the conference. The PK (preacher's kid) should be at the center, who is on the spectrum and needs specialized education. At the center should be a congregation that has longed to have steady pastoral leadership. At the center should be spouses who are experiencing a mental health crisis. At the center should be conference administrators who have a heart for mission and not politics. The pastor who received a prenatal call to ministry should be at the center, similar to the prophet Jeremiah.

The implemented project was a success. The hypothesis, "if Seventh-day Adventist denominational pastors within the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Inc., past and present, attend a six-week symposium about the effects of itineracy on the pastor's family, then pastors will be equipped with ministry tools to change how pastoral itineracy affects family and church well-being through the lenses of church mission execution."

With a series of teaching modules and engagements through dialogue, the pastors who participated, according to the shared data, have received information, mitigating tools, and a well-being resource plan to aid ministers in navigating Pastoral Itineracy as practiced in the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Paul planted, Apollos watered, and God granted the increase. A transparent and inclusive process identified a seasonal approach to ministry needs, with all relevant variables working to produce a synergistic model. The caution for the future model will be not to allow the past to repeat itself but to allow the system to communicate the nonfunctional aspects that are to be addressed through feedback loops.

APPENDIX A

MEETING AGENDAS

MEETING AGENDAS

Meeting #1

– Introduction, instructions, and the problem identified and defined –

10 Minutes – Introduction of principal investigator and project participants

10 Minutes – Pre-Project-Survey – 10 questions

5 Minutes – Break

20 Minutes – Introduction on scope of project/ Instructions on methods of project

Meeting #2

– A Biblical Perspective of the Itinerant System –

20 Minutes – "*Synergy in Ministry: Planting, Watering, Growing- a Ministry of Well-Being."*

5 Minutes – Break

20 Minutes – *"Synergy in Ministry: Planting, Watering, Growing- a Ministry of Well-Being."*

30 Minutes – Group Discussion

Meeting #3

– An Historical Perspective of the Itinerant System –

15 Minutes – "*The History of Pastoral Itineracy in the Christian Church"*

15 Minutes – *"The History of Pastoral Itineracy in the Seventh-day Adventist Context"*

15 Minutes – *"Data of Seventh-day Adventist Pastors and Churches attitudes on Pastoral Itineracy"*

5 Minutes – Break

30 Minutes – Group Discussion

Meeting #4

– A Theological Perspective of the Itinerant System –

20 Minutes – "*A Theology on God's perspective, purpose, and projection of God's Creation."*

5 Minutes – Break

20 Minutes – *"A Theology on God's perspective, purpose, and projection of God's Creation."*

30 Minutes – Group Discussion

Meeting #5

– Mitigating the Effects of Pastoral Itineracy in Finances, Family, and Future Planning –

20 Minutes – "*We Can ALL WIN!"*

5 Minutes – Break

30 Minutes – Group Discussion

Meeting #6

– A Psychological Perspective of the Itinerant System –

40 Minutes – "*Positive Psychology."*

5 Minutes – Break

30 Minutes – Group Discussion

Meeting #7

– A Psychological Perspective of the Itinerant System part 2–

20 Minutes – "*Martin Seligman PERMA Theory of Well-being and Flourishing."*

5 Minutes – Break

20 Minutes – "*PERMAH Assessment"*

30 Minutes – Group Discussion

Meeting #8

– A REFINED SYSTEM –

20 Minutes – "*Teaching Modules Reviewed."*

5 Minutes – Break

20 Minutes – Closing Directions/Post-Survey Questionnaire

30 Minutes – Group Discussion – Where do we go from here?

APPENDIX B

PERMAH WORKPLACE SURVEYS

YOUR FEELINGS AT WORK

Take a moment and consider how well you have felt and functioned at work over the past two weeks. Indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements, ranging from 0 (never, 0%) to 10 (always, 100%).

Please note throughout the survey the word workplace is used to simply mean the organization you are paid by or put meaningful contributions towards. The word team is used to simply mean the people you spend most of your time working alongside.

I felt calm at work

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I felt excited at work

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I felt anxious at work

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I felt energized by my work

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I felt worn out by my work

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I felt connected with people at work

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I often felt alone and isolated at work

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I felt overwhelmed by the tasks I had to do

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I felt safe at work to bring up problems and be honest about mistakes

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I felt like I was struggling

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I felt it was best to keep my struggles to myself at work

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I felt like I was thriving

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I felt able to manage my own wellbeing

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I felt motivated to care for my wellbeing

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

I was satisfied with my job

never *half the time* *always*

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7 ○ 8 ○ 9 ○ 10

YOUR WELLBEING AT WORK

Take a moment and consider how well you have felt and functioned at work over the past two weeks.

Taking all things together, over the past two weeks I mostly felt like I was:

- ○ Really Struggling
- ○ Living well, despite struggle
- ○ Not feeling bad, just getting by
- ○ Consistently thriving

The biggest cause of my struggles during the last two weeks has been:

- ○ My physical health
- ○ My mental health
- ○ Dealing with people
- ○ Managing money
- ○ Navigating changes
- ○ Caring for others
- ○ Other

The biggest barrier to caring for my wellbeing over the last two weeks was:

- ○ Not enough time
- ○ Not enough money
- ○ Too much physical effort required
- ○ Too much mental energy required
- ○ Not sure how to start
- ○ Other

Anything else you'd like to share?

APPENDIX C

UTS INFORMED CONSENT FORM

United Theological Seminary
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Investigator Name: Georges J. Fleurimond Contact Information: gjfleurimond1@united.edu, 256.694.9545

Greetings my fellow colleague, my name is Georges J Fleurimond and I am a doctoral student at United Theological Seminary.

I am conducting a study on effects of pastoral itineracy, on the pastor and the pastor's family, as modelled by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

You are invited because you serve in pastoral ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist context, which practices an itinerant system. You are also invited because you are uniquely qualified to share your perspective on the subject having experienced itineracy, first hand.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to: participate in a six (8) week project; participate in questionnaires, groups discussions, focused interviews, and personal journaling; participate in weekly course modules. The expectation is for you to be honest, confidential, and respectful of other participant's views.

All the participants must consented to be in the study, and participants must be protected and treated fairly throughout the study. Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant during the study must provide a doctor's note for their safety, being considered a protected class (i.e., vulnerable population) by the Federal Law.

The exclusion criteria is as follow, Pastors and Pastoral Families: who have not experienced a pastoral move since initial pastoral appointments; who have suffered and received treatment for any trauma resulting from the Pastoral Itinerant model as practiced in the Seventh-day Adventist Church; that may be triggered by the any conversation surrounding the topic of Pastoral Itineracy as practiced in the Seventh-day Adventist Church; who are or have been in litigation with the Seventh-day Adventist church as a result of its pastoral itineracy practices.

*Any persons that may have suffered marital, economic, legal, and mental health consequences as a result of the Seventh-day Adventist itinerant model.

There great benefits to this study. One benefit is the creation a safe place for pastors and their spouses to discuss the effects of Pastoral Itineracy as practiced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Secondarily, this project will benefit the participant by introducing creative priniples in mitigating the negative effects of itinerary. Ultimately, this project will benefit the participants by equipping them with data to support their attitudes in an effort to moderate their behaviors.

Participation is voluntary and you may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. You can also stop participating at any time. Your decision to participate will have no

impact on the investigator's perception of you nor will this study impact the status of your employment. If something makes you feel uncomfortable in any way while you are in the study, please contact me directly in person, on the phone, or electronic communication. My contact information is at the top of this consent form. You can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time.

We will be careful to keep your information confidential, and we will ask you and all the focus group members to keep the discussion confidential as well. There is always a small risk of unwanted or accidental disclosure. The conversations and the focus groups will be recorded and transcribed only with your permission. Any notes, recordings, or transcriptions will be kept private. I will be the only one with access to your information. The files will be encrypted and password protected. You can decide whether you want your name used. The weekly meetings will be recorded in an effort to allow the investigator to capture necessary data, additional, Webex meetings will be utilized to capture individual interviews. Every effort to keep you identity anonymous will be taken.

If you have any questions about the research study please contact me.

Signing this paper means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

_____ _____

Signature of Person Agreeing to Participate in the Project/Study

Date Signed

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